Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass

BY LEWIS CARROLL

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY ADRIAN MITCHELL

ALICE IN WONDERLAND
AND THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Lewis Carroll

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AND THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Adapted for the stage by Adrian Mitchell

from the novels

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*

by Lewis Carroll

Lyrics by Lewis Carroll, adapted by Adrian Mitchell

Additional lyrics by Adrian Mitchell

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ALICE IN WONDERLAND AND
THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Scenes and Songs

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Millions of Alices

Adrian Mitchell would like to dedicate this play to the memory of Tove Jansson, the magical Finnish writer and artist who created the Moomins. She was a great writer in the tradition of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, E Nesbitt and Anton Chekhov.

Characters

Charles DODGSON (Lewis Carroll) also DODO and WHITE KNIGHT
Canon DUCKWORTH also DUCK
ALICE Liddell (aged 10)
LORINA Liddell (aged l3) also the LORY
EDITH Liddell (aged 8) also the EAGLET
White RABBIT (and puppet)
UNSEEN VOICE
CAKE VOICE
BOTTLE VOICE
CROCODILE puppet
MOUSE
OLD MAGPIE
CANARY
CATERPILLAR (and Caterpillar puppet)
FATHER WILLIAM, also in Jabberwocky
YOUTH, also in Jabberwocky
FISH-FOOTMAN
FROG-FOOTMAN
DUCHESS
BABY pig puppet
COOK
CHESHIRE CAT
March HARE also HAIGHA
Mad HATTER also HATTA
DORMOUSE
FIVE, TWO, SEVEN
of Spades, three playing-card gardeners
Soldiers (as Clubs), Courtiers (as Diamonds),
Royal Children (as Hearts) and Guests
QUEEN of Hearts
KNAVE of Hearts
KING of Hearts
FIRST SOLDIER (as Ace of Clubs)
GRYPHON
MOCK TURTLE
PUPPETS of all courtroom characters except Alice
Dinah (Alice's cat – puppet)
Kitty (Dinah's black kitten – puppet)

Snowdrop (Dinah's white kitten – puppet)
TIGER-LILY
GOAT
Railway GUARD
GENTLEMAN in white paper
BEETLE
HORSE
FAWN
TWEEDLEDUM
TWEEDLEDEE
WALRUS
CARPENTER
OLD OYSTER
OYSTERS and their GHOSTS
RED KING
Crow – puppet
WHITE QUEEN also SHEEP (and puppet)
HUMPTY DUMPTY
Slithy TOVES
BOROGOVES
Mome RATHS
ARMY SERGEANT
SOLDIERS
WHITE KING (and puppet)
LION
UNICORN
CROWD and DRUMMERS
RED KNIGHT
AGED AGED MAN
FOOD, MUSICIANS and FIREWORKS
JABBERWOCK

This dramatisation of *Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass* was first performed by the RSC at the Barbican Theatre, London, on 29 October 2001, with the following cast:

Katherine Heath	Alice
John Conroy	Caterpillar, Ace of Clubs, White King
Jamie de Courcey	Duckworth, Duck, Ten of Diamonds, Red Knight
Rosie Craig	Lorine, Lory, Four of Hearts, Mome Rath
Marilyn Cutts	Dormouse, White Queen
Fiona Dunn	Unseen Voice, Crocodile's Voice, Canary, Cook, Four of Diamonds, Whiting, Mome Rath
Martyn Ellis	Gryphon, Humpty Dumpty
Daniel Flynn	Dodgson, Dodo, White Knight
Jamie Golding	Youth, Six of Diamonds, Tweedledum
Richard Henders	White Rabbit
John Hodgkinson	King of Hearts, Borogove, Railway Guard, Unicorn
Robert Horwell	Duchess, Father William, Walrus
Christopher Key	Fish-Footman, Three of Clubs, Snail, Slithy Tove
Paul Kissaun	Frog-Footman, Nine of Clubs, Horse, Slithy Tove
Chris Larner	Mad Hatter, Carpenter, Hatta
Paul Leonard	Voice of Cake, Mock Turtle, Man in White Paper, Red King
Mark McLean	Two of Spades, Slithy Tove, Beetle, Lion
Laura Main	Edith, Eaglet, Two of Hearts, Mome Rath
Dominic Marsh	Knave of Hearts, Slithy Tove, Fawn
Mitchell Moreno	Five of Spades, Snail, Borogove, Goat
Sarah Quist	Magpie, Baby Voice, Seven of Spades, Mome Rath
Sarah Redmond	Voice of Bottle, Cheshire Cat, Whiting, Tiger-Lily
Liza Sadovy	Queen of Hearts, Red Queen

Adam Sims	Mouse, Eight of Diamonds, Porpoise, Slithy Tove, Tweedledee
Martin Turner	March Hare, Borogove, Haigha, Aged Aged Man

Director	Rachel Kavanaugh
Designer	Peter McKintosh
Composers	Terry Davies and Stephen Warbeck
Lighting Designer	Chris Davey
Sound Designers	Andrew Bruce and Terry Jardine for Autograph
Movement Director	Linda Dobell
Producer	Denise Wood

ACT ONE

Scene 1: The River

Warm, flowing music. Curtain up on July 4th, 1862. A cloudless, golden afternoon on the river above Oxford. A long rowing-boat drifts down stream. It is low, with dark polished woodwork, bright silver rowlocks, a rudder with white ropes, two oars, seats with backs of criss-cross wickerwork in dark wood frames with faded green cushions. It's a fine craft. Resting on their oars sit Charles DODGSON, Lewis Carroll, who is 30, and his friend Canon DUCKWORTH. They are taking the three daughters of Dean Liddell out for a river picnic. LORINA, the eldest child, 13, and EDITH, the youngest sister, 8, sit together in the stern with the steering ropes in their laps. Between the young men and her sisters sits ALICE, aged 10, leaning forward and focused on DODGSON.

DODGSON: (*Sings*.) A boat under a summer sky
Lingering onward dreamily
Down a quiet river in July.

ALL: (*Sing*.) All in a golden afternoon.

DUCKWORTH: (*Sings*.) And three sisters are whispering
Stories of bright imagining
As we float towards the evening.

ALL: (*Sing*.) All in a golden afternoon
Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily –

Life is but a dream.
All in a golden afternoon
All in a golden afternoon.

ALICE: Tell us a story. Please Mr Dodgson. Tell us a story with plenty of nonsense in it.

DODGSON: I've told you one story already today, Alice. That's all till next time.

ALICE/LORINA/EDITH: Ah, but it is next time.

DODGSON: Too hot for stories on the river.

DUCKWORTH: Let's find some shade.

EDITH: There's our old chestnut tree!

LORINA: Yes. Make fast the bow, Mr Duckworth!

DUCKWORTH obediently loops the painter over a wooden stake at the riverbank.

LORINA does the same at the stern.

ALICE: All ashore that's going ashore!

ALL clamber out onto a green riverbank with a chestnut tree. This tree should be used in every scene which calls for a tree, including the Cheshire Cat's tree. But we should see it, if possible, from different angles, sometimes with decorations, banners, signposts etc, sometimes with blossoms or conkers or bare branches, so it's always different.

DODGSON produces a large and beautiful cloth – probably Oriental – embroidered with animals. He spreads it on the grass in the shadow of the tree. ALL sit on it.

DUCKWORTH puts down a large picnic basket.

DUCKWORTH: Cold chicken, salad, biscuits, oranges, ginger beer and lemonade.

LORINA, ALICE and EDITH applaud him.

ALICE: We're all ready for our story, Mr Dodgson.

DODGSON: Very well. Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sisters on the riverbank and having nothing to do. She was considering whether to make a daisy-chain when –

ALL except ALICE freeze.

ALICE stands up as a White RABBIT wearing spectacles, a waistcoat and tweed jacket brushes past her. He has pink eyes and carries a parasol under his left arm. He is elderly, timid, feeble and nervously shilly-shallying. ALICE steps forward.

RABBIT: Oh dear! Oh dear! I'll be too late.

RABBIT takes a watch out of his waistcoat pocket and scurries around the riverbank looking for something in the ground. Finally he picks up the lower end of the picnic cloth to reveal a large rabbit-hole. He pops into it.

ALICE: You don't lose me that easily! (*ALICE follows RABBIT into the rabbit hole and vanishes.*)

Transformation: magical entry to Wonderland sounds, and dream music.

Scene 2: The Rabbit Hole

ALICE becomes visible in a dark space. She is walking forward on the spot, mystified.

ALICE: A dark tunnel. Oh, the tunnel's dipping. Steeper and steeper. I'm falling. Falling down a very deep well. (*ALICE is falling. Sometimes she seems to be falling upwards, or sideways, or diagonally down or circling down. But she has time to look around her*.) Falling. Cupboards and bookshelves. Maps and pictures. (*Picks a jar off a shelf as she passes*.) 'Orange marmalade.' (*Disappointed*.) Oh, it's empty. I don't like to drop it. I might kill somebody underneath. I'll pop it in the next cupboard I pass. (*Does so. ALICE somersaults as she falls*.)

CHORUS: (*Sings*.) Down down down
Falling down the rabbit hole
Falling very slowly
Down down down.

ALICE: Well! After this I'll think nothing of tumbling downstairs! I wouldn't complain even if I fell off the roof of our house!

UNSEEN VOICE: (*Laughing*.) You wouldn't be able to, would you?

CHORUS: (*Sings*.) Down down down
Falling down the rabbit hole
Falling very slowly
Down down down.

ALICE: (*Falling sideways as if reclining on an invisible sofa*.) I wonder how many miles I've fallen? I must be near the centre of the earth. That's about four thousand miles down… If I fall right through the earth the people will be walking about on their heads! I'll have to ask: Please ma'am, is this New Zealand or Australia? (*Now she is upside down and falling head first*.)

CHORUS: (*Sings*.) Down down down
Falling down the rabbit hole
Falling very slowly
Down down down.

ALICE manages a sitting position as she falls past a cat – looking rather like the Cheshire Cat will look later.

ALICE: Oh Dinah, my good old cat! I hope they remember your teatime saucer of milk. Oh Dinah! I wish you were here. There aren't any mice in mid-air, but you might catch a bat.

Cat fades away and is replaced by a whirling mobile of shimmering bats.

And a bat's very like a mouse. But do cats eat bats? Do bats eat cats?

CHORUS: (*Sings*.) Down down down
And thumpety thump thump
Down into a heap of leaves!

ALICE falls in a spectacular spiral and lands in a heap of leaves. She gets to her feet in time to see the White RABBIT stopping to consult his watch.

RABBIT: Oh my ears and whiskers! How late it's getting!

RABBIT hurries off into the distance.

ALICE runs after him, but he vanishes.

Scene 3: The Glass Table

ALICE finds herself alone in a long dark hall. The hall is lit by lamps or torches held out by arms projecting from the wall, as in Cocteau's Beauty

and the Beast, but these are the arms of animals and birds' arms. The arms direct ALICE past a line of doors. She tries each door.

ALICE: They're all locked. I need a key – oh! (*ALICE stops beside a little table made of solid glass. On it is a small golden key. She picks it up.*) A key. But it's too small for these doors. Ah. (*She sees a little door in one of the big doors. It's about 15 inches high. She tries the golden key*.) It fits. (*ALICE opens the door, kneels down and looks through*.) There's a garden through there. Bright flowers. Cool fountains. Oh I wish I could escape from this dark hall into that bright garden. But I'm just too big to squeeze through. Better lock up again. (*ALICE locks the door again and goes back to the table and replaces the key. Now there is a cake on the table*.) Oh good, a little cake! Like a birthday cake for a robin.

CAKE VOICE: (*Sings*.) Eat me! Eat me!

ALICE: Well, just a bite. Why not? Hmm. Yes. Might as well finish it.

Transformation: Wonderland music reflecting ALICE's change in height as the hall and table grow smaller and she grows to nine feet tall.

(*Stretching upwards*.) I'm opening up like a giant telescope! Goodbye, feet! Ooh! (*Her head strikes the roof of the hall. She bends down, takes the golden key off the tiny glass table and reaches down to the garden door. She has to lie down on one side to open the door*.) I can just see into the garden. But now I'm much too big to get through. I must be nine feet tall! That's taller than both my sisters standing on top of each other. I'll never get into the garden. (*Sobs*.) Alice! A great girl like you crying like this. Stop it at once. (*Sobs*.)

The White RABBIT, splendidly dressed, trots past her in a great hurry. He is now much smaller than ALICE, and is played by a Puppet.

RABBIT: Oh! The Duchess, the Duchess! Oh my fur and whiskers! Won't she be savage if I've kept her waiting!

ALICE: If you please, sir –

RABBIT: Why Mary Ann, what are you doing out here? Run home at once and scrub the kitchen floor! (*Rushes on and exits.*)

ALICE: (*Indignantly*.) He mistook me for his housemaid! (*Spots a bottle on a shelf high up, and takes it.*)

BOTTLE VOICE: (*Sings*.) Drink me! Drink me!

ALICE: That's all very well. I won't do that in a hurry. Are you marked 'Poison'? No. Just a sip. Hmm. Yes. It's a kind of mixed flavour – cherry tart, pineapple, roast turkey, toffee. And hot buttered toast. (*ALICE finishes the bottle*.) Oh! Curiouser and curiouser.

Transformation: Wonderland music reflecting ALICE's sudden change in height – she's getting smaller.

What a curious feeling! Now I'm shutting up like a telescope.

The scale of the hall and table has changed. The lamps and roots are out of sight. The doors are towering. But the little door is now the right height for ALICE, now a few inches high.

Now I'm the right size for the garden door. (*She goes towards the door, remembers the key*.) But it's locked. (*Starts back towards the glass table, but now it's huge*.) The key! I can see it. But I can't reach it. If I climb up. (*She tries to climb a table-leg.*) Too slippy. (*Sits down and cries – just one sob.*) Come on, Alice, it's no use crying. (*To us*.) I generally give very good advice to myself. But who am I? I'm not sure. How strange

everything is today. I'll sing an old song to comfort myself – How Doth the Little Busy Bee. (*Sings*.)

How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail
And pour the waters of the Nile
On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin
How neatly spreads his claws
And welcomes little fishes in
With gently smiling jaws.

During the song a CROCODILE puppet has appeared to dance to the song. CROCODILE turns and listens to ALICE.

Those are the wrong words!

CROCODILE: (*Bowing*.) They were delightful. (*Exit CROCODILE*.)

ALICE curtsies to the CROCODILE, but slips and finds herself swimming.

ALICE: Salt water? Have I fallen in the sea? If this is the seaside, I can go home by railway. Salty – oh – it must be a pool of my tears – my tears when I was nine feet high. I suppose I'll be punished by drowning in my own tears.

A MOUSE appears swimming near to her. He is about as big as ALICE.

A mouse! Maybe he knows the way out of the pool. I'd better introduce myself. My name is Alice and I have two sisters and a cat called Dinah –

The MOUSE gives a leap and shivers.

Oh, I'm sorry, I forgot that you don't like cats.

MOUSE: Would you like cats if you were me?

ALICE: (*Soothingly as she swims lazily*.) But Dinah's such a kindly cat. She sits purring by the fire, licking her paws and washing her face – and she's so good at catching mice – I'm sorry!

MOUSE: (*Trembling*.) Our family always hated cats. Nasty, low, vulgar creatures!

The pool is filling up with animals and birds which have fallen into it. These include a DUCK (Duckworth), a DODO (Dodgson), a LORY (Lorina as an Australian parrot) and an EAGLET (Edith). Like most of the birds and animals in Wonderland, they are awkward, have rather big feet and stand in odd attitudes.

ALICE: Are you fond of dogs? There's such a sweet little terrier near our house. It fetches sticks and sits up and begs. The farmer says it's worth a hundred pounds because it kills all the rats and – oh! I'm sorry!

The MOUSE swims as far away as possible.

MOUSE: Come to the shore – I'll tell you why I hate cats and dogs.

ALICE, MOUSE and all the other CREATURES scramble ashore. They are bedraggled, dripping, cross and uncomfortable.

DUCK: How are we going to get dry?

CREATURES: How are we going to get dry?

LORY: We could think dry thoughts.

ALICE: What about?

LORY: Dry things – deserts, geometry and old biscuits.

ALICE: You may be a wise parrot, but I don't believe anyone ever got dry by thinking. Shaking, perhaps.

LORY: I'm older than you, so I know better. And I'm not a parrot, I'm a lory.

ALICE: How old are you?

LORY: Never you mind.

CREATURES: Never you mind!

DODO: The best thing to get us all dry would be – a Caucus Race.

ALICE: What's a Caucus Race?

DODO: Why, the best way to explain it is to do it.

CREATURES: Let's all do it.

DODO: First I mark out the race course. (*Using its walking-stick to mark out a haphazard course around the stage*.) Now all find a place around the course.

CREATURES: (*Shuffling around, some already starting to run*.) All find a place.

ALICE: Don't you say ready, steady, go?

DODO: No, no. Everybody starts when they want to start.

CREATURES, including DODO and ALICE, rush around in the mad dance known as the Caucus Race. It is like a kind of insane Olympics, aping every imaginable sport. Eventually ALL collapse.

DODO: The race is over.

ALICE: But who has won?

CREATURES: Who has won?

DODO: (*After deep thought*.) Everybody has won, and all must have prizes.

ALICE: Who gives the prizes?

DODO: Why you do, of course.

CREATURES: (*Crowding round ALICE*.) Prizes! Prizes!

ALICE: Oh! (*She feels in her pocket and brings out a box of little sweets. She hands them out*.) Well done! You jumped excellently! Good effort! Fine skidding! A good try! Well done everyone! (*All CREATURES now have sweets*.)

MOUSE: But she must have a prize herself.

DODO: Of course. Anything else in your pocket?

ALICE: (*Sadly*.) Only a thimble.

DODO: Hand it over.

ALICE does so.

CREATURES crowd round enthusiastically.

We beg your acceptance of this elegant thimble.

CREATURES: Huzzah! Huzzah!

ALICE succeeds in not giggling. She bows and accepts her thimble as solemnly as she can.

ALICE: Now you may all eat your prizes!

CREATURES choke and splutter over their sweets.

ALICE pats the worst chokers on the back.

(*To MOUSE*.) You promised to tell me why you hate – Cs and Ds.

MOUSE: (*Sighing*.) Mine is a long and a sad tale.

CREATURES: (*Sighing*.) Long sad tale.

The tail-shaped poem 'Fury Said to the Mouse' appears – together with a picture of a mouse being tried by a dog in a judge's wig.

MOUSE: (*Sings*.) Fury said the mouse that he met in the house,
'Let us both go to law, I will prosecute you.
Come I'll take no denial, we must have a trial,
For really this morning I've nothing to do.'

CREATURES: (*Sing*.) 'Come I'll take no denial, we must have a trial, For really this morning I've nothing to do.'

MOUSE: (*Sings*.) Said the mouse to the cur, 'Such a trial, dear sir,
With no jury or judge, would be wasting our breath.'
'I'll be judge, I'll be jury,' said cunning old Fury,
'I'll try the whole cause and condemn you to death.'

CREATURES: (*Sing*.)
'I'll be judge, I'll be jury,' said cunning old Fury,
'I'll try the whole cause and condemn you to death.'

ALICE stretches and yawns.

MOUSE: You yawned. You have insulted my honour. (*Walks away*.)

ALICE: I didn't mean it!

MOUSE exits.

Oh, I wish Dinah was here.

LORY: Who's Dinah?

CREATURES: Who's Dinah?

ALICE: She's our cat. She's so quick. I wish you could see her chase the birds in our apple tree. She'll eat a little bird as soon as look at it.

Sensation. Birds begin to leave hurriedly.

OLD MAGPIE: Really must be getting home: the night air doesn't suit my throat.

CANARY: High time I put my chicks to bed.

EAGLET: Back to my eyrie I suppose.

CREATURES: Time for a rest. Back to the nest.

All CREATURES exit. The hall and the table have vanished.

ALICE: (*Alone*.) Perhaps I shouldn't have mentioned Dinah. (*She looks around*.) I can't see that glass table anywhere. I must find my way into that lovely garden. But first I have to grow bigger. I suppose I'd better eat or drink something. The great question is, what??

Scene 4: Advice from a Caterpillar

Exotic music. Smoke. Through the smoke appears a large mushroom, about the same height as ALICE. She looks around the mushroom. Then she stretches on tiptoes and her eyes immediately meet those of a large blue CATERPILLAR. He sits on top of the mushroom, arms folded, quietly smoking a long hookah. They stare at each other. The CATERPILLAR takes the hookah out of his mouth and addresses ALICE in a languid, sleepy voice.

CATERPILLAR: Who are *you*?

ALICE: (*Rather shyly*.) I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I've changed several times since then.

CATERPILLAR: (*Sternly*.) What do you mean? Explain yourself!

ALICE: I can't explain *myself*, sir, because I'm not myself, you see.

CATERPILLAR: I don't see.

ALICE: Being different sizes on the same day is very confusing.

CATERPILLAR: No, it's not.

ALICE: When you have to turn into a chrysalis – you will some day, you know – and then into a butterfly, you'll feel a little odd, won't you?

CATERPILLAR: Not a bit.

ALICE: I'd find it very odd.

CATERPILLAR: (*Contemptuously*.) You! Who are *you*?

ALICE: (*Seriously*.) I think you ought to tell me who *you* are, first.

CATERPILLAR: Why?

ALICE turns away, since the CATERPILLAR seems to be unpleasant.

Come back! I've something important to say!

ALICE comes back.

Keep your temper.

ALICE: Is that all?

CATERPILLAR: No. (*Puffs on his hookah, takes it out of his mouth again*.) You think you've changed, do you?

ALICE: I'm afraid so. I can't remember properly. I tried to recite How Doth the Little Busy Bee, but it came out all wrong.

CATERPILLAR: Repeat 'You Are Old Father William'.

ALICE: (*Folds her hands and begins*.) '"You are old, Father William," the young man said – '

Enter FATHER WILLIAM and YOUTH in a bustle, a double act anxious to prevent their routine from being stolen.

FATHER WILLIAM/YOUTH: Just a minute! Just a minute! Just a minute! That's our poem.

FATHER WILLIAM: We'll do it.

YOUTH and FATHER WILLIAM enter into an acrobatic song and dance.

YOUTH: (*Sings*.)

'You are old, Father William,' the young man said,
'And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head –
Do you think, at your age, it is right?'

FATHER WILLIAM: (*Sings.*)

'In my youth,' Father William replied to his son,
'I feared it might injure the brain;
But, now I am perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again.'

YOUTH: (*Sings*.)

'You are old,' said the youth, 'as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;

Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door –
Pray, what is the reason of that?'

FATHER WILLIAM: (*Sings*.)

'In my youth,' said the sage, as he shook his grey locks,
'I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of this ointment – one shilling the box –
Allow me to sell you a couple?'

YOUTH: (*Sings*.)

'You are old,' said the youth, 'and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak –
Pray, how did you manage to do it?'

FATHER WILLIAM: (*Sings*.)

'In my youth,' said his father, 'I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw,
Has lasted the rest of my life.'

YOUTH: (*Sings*.)

'You are old,' said the youth, 'one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose –
What made you so awfully clever?'

FATHER WILLIAM: (*Sings*.)

'I have answered three questions, and that is enough,'
Said his father, 'don't give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs.'

YOUTH: (*Sings*.) Pardon me?

FATHER WILLIAM: (*Sings*.) Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs.

FATHER WILLIAM/YOUTH: (*Sing.*)
Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs!

FATHER WILLIAM and YOUTH exit like two song and dance men.

CATERPILLAR: That was not sung right.

ALICE: Some of the words got altered.

CATERPILLAR: It was wrong from beginning to end. (*Pause*.)
What size do you want to be?

ALICE: I'm not fussy.

CATERPILLAR: Are you happy with your present size?

ALICE: I'd like to be a *little* larger, sir. Three inches is such a wretched height.

CATERPILLAR: (*Rearing himself up angrily to his full three inches*.)
It's a very good height indeed! I am exactly three inches high!

ALICE: But I'm not used to it.

CATERPILLAR: It'll grow on you. (*Puts the hookah into his mouth, relaxes, yawns, puffs smoke. Speaks sleepily*.) One side makes you taller, the other side makes you shorter. (*Falling asleep*.)

ALICE: One side of *what*?

CATERPILLAR: (*Waking for a moment*.) The mushroom. (*Falls asleep*.)

ALICE is left inspecting the mushroom. She stretches her arms round it as far as they will go and breaks a bit off the edge with each hand.

ALICE: Now which side is which?

ALICE looks at each piece, then nibbles a little bit from her right hand.

Transformation music. She begins to shrink but immediately takes a big bite from her left hand. Music changes – a flash and rumble and suddenly she is her proper height again, standing beside a life-size mushroom on which perches a three-inch…

(*Bending down*.) Thank you so much for your good advice.

There is no reply, but much smoke from the hookah.

The garden must be this way.

ALICE walks through the smoke and loses sight of the mushroom.

Scene 5: The Footmen

ALICE finds herself standing near the pillared porch outside the front door of a house. A FISH-FOOTMAN, in full livery but with the head of a fish, rushes up with a huge envelope under his arm and raps loudly on the door with his knuckles. The door is opened by a FROG-FOOTMAN, also in livery with a powdered wig on his frog head. ALICE creeps closer to listen.

FISH-FOOTMAN: (*Producing the letter.*) For the Duchess. An Invitation from the Queen to play a game of croquet.

FROG-FOOTMAN: (*Taking it.*) From Queen. Invitation for the croquet to play Duchess.

Both FOOTMEN bow low, bump heads and fall down.

ALICE stifles her laughter.

The FISH-FOOTMAN jumps to his feet, bows and exits.

FROG-FOOTMAN stays sitting on the ground near the door, staring up at the sky. ALICE walks timidly up to the door and knocks.

There's no sort of use in knocking, and that for two reasons. First, because I'm on the same side of the door as you are. Secondly, because they're making so much noise inside, no one could possibly hear you.

From inside can be heard a terrible howling and sneezing, and every now and then a crash as if a dish or a kettle has been broken.

ALICE: How can I get in, please?

FROG-FOOTMAN: There might be some sense in your knocking if you were inside. You could knock, and I might let you out.

The door of the house opens, a large plate skims out past the FROG-FOOTMAN's head and breaks off-stage. Door slams shut.

ALICE: But I want to get in.

FROG-FOOTMAN: I want doesn't always get.

ALICE: (*To us*.) It's awful the way these creatures argue. It's enough to drive you crazy.

FROG-FOOTMAN: I shall sit here, on and off, for days and days.

ALICE: But what can I do?

FROG-FOOTMAN: Anything you like. (*He begins to whistle*.)

ALICE: It's no use talking to you, you're a perfect idiot.

FROG-FOOTMAN: Not quite perfect, miss, but I does my best.

ALICE walks up to the door which opens by itself. ALICE walks in.

Scene 6: The Duchess's Kitchen

Suddenly ALICE is in a smoky kitchen. The DUCHESS sits on a three-legged stool in the middle, nursing a BABY-pig puppet, whose mouth can open and shut to simulate howling. The COOK stirs a large cauldron full of soup.

ALICE: (*Sneezing*.) There's too much pepper in that soup. The air's full of pepper!

The DUCHESS sneezes. The BABY sneezes and howls alternately. The COOK does not sneeze. Nor does the CHESHIRE CAT which sits grinning on the hearth.

Pardon me, but would you be the Duchess?

DUCHESS: I am the Duchess. But I wouldn't be if I wasn't, would I?

ALICE: (*Timidly*.) Why is your cat grinning like that?

DUCHESS: It's a Cheshire cat, that's why. (*Violently to the BABY*.) Pig!

ALICE: I didn't know Cheshire cats grinned; I didn't know cats could grin.

DUCHESS: All of 'em can, and most of 'em do.

ALICE: I don't know of any that do.

DUCHESS: You don't know much, and that's a fact.

The COOK turns and throws some saucepans, plates and dishes towards the DUCHESS, who takes no notice at all, except to fend off the odd missile with the BABY.

ALICE: Watch out! Mind the baby's nose!

DUCHESS: (*Growls*.) If everyone minded their own business, the world would go round a great deal faster.

ALICE: That wouldn't be an advantage. Think of what it would do to day and night. The earth takes twenty-four hours to turn round on its axis –

DUCHESS: Talking of axes – chop off her head!

ALICE: Twenty-four hours, I think; or is it twelve? I –

DUCHESS: Don't bother me. I never could abide figures!
(*Sings to BABY, with a violent shake at the end of each line*.)
Speak roughly to your little boy
And beat him when he sneezes.
He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases.

DUCHESS/COOK/BABY: Wow! Wow! Wow!

DUCHESS: I speak severely to my boy,
I beat him when he sneezes,
For he can thoroughly enjoy
The pepper when he pleases.

DUCHESS/COOK/BABY-Pig: Wow! Wow! Wow!

ALICE: Poor baby!

DUCHESS: Here! If you're so sorry for it, you can nurse it!
(*Flings the BABY at ALICE, who catches it.*) I must get ready to play croquet with the Queen.

DUCHESS hurries out.

COOK throws a frying-pan after her, then aims a saucepan at ALICE, who exits smartly.

Scene 7: A Wood

ALICE runs into the wood with the BABY and inspects it. It snorts and jumps about in her arms awkwardly, doubling up and straightening itself out.

ALICE: What a baby! You snort like a steam-engine. But I can't leave you in that kitchen. They'd kill you.

The BABY grunts.

Try not to grunt.

BABY grunts again.

What's wrong? What tiny eyes you have! And your nose is more like a snout. Please don't turn into a pig.

BABY grunts.

ALICE walks on. By now she has turned the BABY round and we can see it has become a pig.

Oh no, I can't take this creature home with me!

BABY grunts violently.

You *are* a pig!

ALICE puts the little pig down on all fours, pats it and walks on into the wood.

(*Sighs with relief.*) It would have been a terribly ugly child, but it makes quite a handsome pig. I can think of a few other children who might do very well as pigs, if only I knew the right way to change them…

She considers the audience. Then she suddenly sees the CHESHIRE CAT sitting on the bough of the chestnut tree. The CHESHIRE CAT grins

when it sees ALICE.

(*Timidly*.) Cheshire Puss.

It grins a little wider.

Please, which way should I go?

CHESHIRE CAT: Depends where you want to get to.

ALICE: I don't much care where –

CHESHIRE CAT: Then it doesn't matter which way you go.

ALICE: – so long as I get somewhere.

CHESHIRE CAT: Oh, you're sure to do that, if you walk long enough.

ALICE: What sort of people live around here?

CHESHIRE CAT: (*Waving its right paw*.) Over there lives a Hatter – and over there (*Waving its left*.) lives a March Hare. Visit either of them: they're both mad.

ALICE: But I don't want to go among mad people.

CHESHIRE CAT: We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad.

ALICE: How do you know I'm mad?

CHESHIRE CAT: You must be, or you wouldn't have come here.

ALICE: And how do you know you're mad?

CHESHIRE CAT: To begin with, a dog's not mad. You grant that?

ALICE: I suppose so.

CHESHIRE CAT: Well a dog growls when it's angry, and wags its tail when it's pleased. But I growl when I'm pleased, and wag my tail when I'm

angry. Therefore I'm mad.

ALICE: I call it purring, not growling.

CHESHIRE CAT: Are you playing croquet with the Queen today?

ALICE: I haven't been invited.

CHESHIRE CAT: You'll see me there.

CHESHIRE CAT suddenly vanishes. ALICE stares around her. CHESHIRE CAT appears again.

(*Like a sly detective.*) By-the-by – I almost forgot to ask – whatever became of that baby?

ALICE: (*Quietly*.) It turned into a pig.

CHESHIRE CAT: I thought it would. (*Vanishes again*.)

ALICE looks left and right.

ALICE: (*Pointing*.) The Mad Hatter. The March Hare. I've seen hatters before. The March Hare sounds more interesting.

The CHESHIRE CAT reappears on a branch.

CHESHIRE CAT: Did you say pig, or fig?

ALICE: Pig! I wish you wouldn't appear and vanish so suddenly – you make me giddy.

CHESHIRE CAT: All right. Gradually does it –

The CHESHIRE CAT vanishes slowly, starting with the end of its tail and ending with the grin, which remains after the rest has gone.

ALICE: Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin. But a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life!

The grin vanishes.

I think the March Hare must live down here. (*Exit*.)

Scene 8: The Mad Tea Party

A long oblong table with a tablecloth, set with teacups, saucers and a large teapot. Crowded together at one end sit the March HARE, the Mad HATTER and the DORMOUSE, who sits, asleep, between the other two, who lean upon it. The HATTER and HARE see ALICE approaching.

HARE/HATTER: No room! No room!

ALICE: (*Indignantly*.) There's *plenty* of room! (*She sits in a large armchair at one end of the table.*)

HARE: Have some wine.

ALICE: (*Looking round the table.*) I don't see any wine.

HARE: There isn't any.

ALICE: (*Angrily*.) Then it wasn't very polite of you to offer it.

HARE: It wasn't very polite of you to sit down without being invited.

ALICE: I didn't know it was *your* table. It's laid for a great many more than three.

HATTER: Your hair wants cutting.

ALICE: It's very rude to make personal remarks.

HATTER: (*Opening his eyes very wide*.) Why is a raven like a writing-desk?

ALICE: Oh, I like riddles. I think I can guess that.

HARE: You mean you can find the answer?

ALICE: Exactly so.

HARE: Then you should say what you mean.

ALICE: I do – at least I mean what I say – that's the same thing, you know.

HATTER: Not the same thing a bit! You might as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as 'I eat what I see'!

HARE: You might as well say that 'I like what I get' is the same thing as 'I get what I like'!

DORMOUSE: (*As if talking in its sleep.*) You might as well say that 'I breathe when I sleep' is the same thing as 'I sleep when I breathe'!

HATTER: It *is* the same thing with you. (*Takes his watch out of his pocket, looks at it uneasily, shaking it now and then, holding it to his ear.*) What day of the month is it?

ALICE: (*Thinking hard*.) The fourth.

HATTER: (*Sighs*.) Two days wrong! (*Angrily to the HARE*.)
I told you butter wouldn't suit the works.

HARE: (*Meekly*.) It was the *best* butter.

HATTER: Yes, but some crumbs must have got in as well. You shouldn't have put it in with the breadknife.

HARE dips the watch in his teacup, looks at it again.

HARE: It was the *best* butter, you know.

HATTER: The Dormouse is asleep again.

HATTER pours some hot tea on the DORMOUSE's nose.

DORMOUSE: (*Shaking its head*.) Of course, of course; just what I was going to say myself.

HATTER: (*To ALICE*.) Have you guessed the riddle yet?

ALICE: No, I give up. Why is a raven like a writing-desk?

HATTER: I haven't the slightest idea.

HARE: Nor I.

ALICE: You might do something better with time than waste it in asking riddles that have no answers.

HATTER: Time's not an it. Time's a he! I dare say you never even spoke to Time! I have. But we quarrelled last March – just before *he* went mad, you know – (*Pointing with his teaspoon at the HARE*.) It was at the great concert given by the Queen of Hearts. I had to sing:

(*Sings.*) Twinkle, twinkle little bat!
How I wonder what you're at!

You know the song, perhaps?

ALICE: I've heard something like it.

HATTER: It goes on, you know, in this way:

(*Sings.*) Up above the world you fly
Like a tea-tray in the sky,
Twinkle, twinkle –

DORMOUSE: (*Shakes itself and begins to sing*.)
Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle –

HATTER and HARE pinch the DORMOUSE and force it to stop.

HATTER: Well, the band couldn't keep up with my singing, so I had to beat Time. And ever since I beat him, Time's against me. It's always six o'clock now – tea-time!

ALICE: Is that why so many places are laid for tea?

HATTER: (*Sighing*.) Yes. It's always tea-time, so there's no time to wash up between meals.

ALICE: So you keep moving round?

HATTER: Exactly so, as the things get used up.

ALICE: What happens when you come to the beginning again?

HARE: (*Yawning*.) Suppose we change the subject. I vote the young lady tells us a story.

ALICE: I'm afraid I don't know any.

HARE/HATTER: The Dormouse does! Wake up Dormouse! (*They pinch it awake*.)

DORMOUSE: (*Feebly, in a hoarse voice*.) I wasn't asleep. I heard every word you fellows were saying.

HARE: Tell us a story!

ALICE: Please!

HATTER: Be quick about it, or you'll be asleep again before it's over.

DORMOUSE: (*Hurriedly*.) Once upon a time there were three little sisters and their names were Elsie, Lacie and Tillie; and they lived at the bottom of a well –

ALICE: What did they live on?

DORMOUSE: (*After thought*.) They lived on treacle.

ALICE: (*Gently*.) They couldn't have done that, you know.
They'd have been ill.

DORMOUSE: So they were. Very ill.

ALICE: But why did they live at the bottom of a well?

HARE: (*Earnestly to ALICE*.) Take some more tea.

ALICE: (*Offended*.) I've had nothing yet, so I can't take more.

HATTER: You mean you can't take less. It's easy to take more than nothing.

ALICE: Nobody asked your opinion.

HATTER: (*Triumphantly*.) Who's making personal remarks now?

ALICE: (*Helping herself to some bread-and-butter.*) Why did they live at the bottom of a well?

DORMOUSE: It was a treacle-well.

ALICE: There's no such thing –

HARE/HATTER: Sh! Sh!
(*Sing*.) Treacle, treacle, little well.

DORMOUSE: If you can't be polite, finish the story yourself.

ALICE: (*Humbly*.) No, please go on. I won't interrupt again.

DORMOUSE: (*Indignantly*.) So these three little sisters were learning to draw –

ALICE: What did they draw?

DORMOUSE: Treacle.

HATTER: I want a clean cup. Let's all move one place on.

ALL jump up and move one place. ALICE finds herself in the HARE's place – he has spilled milk on his plate.

ALICE: (*Cautiously, to avoid offence*.) But I don't understand. Where did they draw the treacle from? Weren't they in the well?

DORMOUSE: Of course they were – well in.

DORMOUSE, HATTER and HARE laugh uproariously.

Eh? (*Yawning and rubbing its eyes*.) They were learning to draw – everything that begins with an M –

ALICE: Why with an M?

HARE: Why not?

DORMOUSE: (*Woken by the pinches of HARE and HATTER*.) – that begins with an M, such as mouse-traps, and the moon, and memory and muchness – you know you say things are much of a muchness – did you ever see such a thing as a drawing of a muchness?

ALICE: Now that you ask me, I don't think –

HATTER: Then you shouldn't talk.

This is more than ALICE can bear. She stands up and walks off. She looks back to see the HATTER and the DORMOUSE trying to put the DORMOUSE into the teapot.

ALICE: I'll never go *there* again! It's the stupidest tea-party I ever was at in all my life. (*ALICE sees the chestnut tree now has a door in it*.) That's very curious! But everything's curious today. (*ALICE opens the door and walks through the tree. She finds herself beside the glass table which is*

now about hip height to her. She takes the little golden key and unlocks the door to the garden. She opens the door.) At last! The beautiful garden!

Scene 9: The Queen's Croquet Ground

ALICE enters the garden. The first thing she sees is a large rose-tree bearing white roses. Three playing-card GARDENERS, the SEVEN, FIVE and TWO of Spades, all oblong and flat, have brushes and pots of paint. They are busily painting the white roses red.

TWO: Look out, Five! Stop splashing!

FIVE: (*Sulkily*.) Seven jogged me elbow.

SEVEN: That's right! Blame it on somebody else!

FIVE: Don't you talk! The Queen says you need beheading!

TWO: What for?

FIVE: For bringing the cook tulip-roots instead of onions.

SEVEN: (*Flinging down his brush*.) That's not fair –

SEVEN sees ALICE, and bows to her. FIVE and TWO follow suit.

ALICE: (*Timidly*.) Why are you painting those roses?

FIVE and SEVEN look at TWO.

TWO: (*Confidentially*.) This here ought to have been a red rose tree, miss. We put a white one in by mistake. If the Queen found out, we'd all have our heads cut off, so we're doing our best, afore she comes, to –

FIVE: The Queen! The Queen of Hearts!

FIVE, SEVEN and TWO fling themselves flat on their faces.

Enter a procession – most of its members are oblong and flat. First come SOLDIERS, carrying clubs. Next come COURTIERS, decorated with diamonds. Next come the ROYAL CHILDREN, decorated with hearts. Next come the GUESTS, mostly Kings and Queens, but also the White RABBIT, behaving nervously, smiling at everything. After that comes the KNAVE of Hearts, carrying the King's crown on a crimson velvet cushion, and, last of all the KING and QUEEN of Hearts. The QUEEN of Hearts has been described by Carroll as 'the embodiment of ungovernable passion – blind and aimless Fury'. The procession stops beside ALICE and ALL stare at her.

QUEEN: (*To KNAVE*.) Who is this?

KNAVE bows and smiles.

Idiot! What's your name, child?

ALICE: My name is Alice, so please your Majesty. (*To us*.) I needn't be afraid of them. They're just a pack of cards.

QUEEN: And who are these? (*Pointing to the three prone GARDENERS*.) I can't tell from their backs.

ALICE: How should I know?

QUEEN: (*Furious*.) Off with her head! Off –

ALICE: (*Loudly and decidedly*.) Nonsense!

KING: (*Placing his hand on the Queen's arm*.) Consider, my dear; she is only a child!

QUEEN: (*Angrily, to the KNAVE*.) Turn them over!

The KNAVE does so, carefully, with one foot.

Get up!

TWO, FIVE and SEVEN jump up guiltily. QUEEN points to the rose-tree.

What *have* you been doing?

TWO: (*Going down on one knee*.) May it please your Majesty, we were trying –

QUEEN: (*Who has been examining the roses*.) I see! Off with their heads!

The procession moves on, apart from three SOLDIERS who approach the cowering GARDENERS.

ALICE: You shan't be beheaded. Get behind me, shuffle yourselves and hide your heads!

The GARDENERS obey her, ending up in a face down pile on the ground.

QUEEN: (*Shouts*.) Are their heads off?

SOLDIERS: Their heads are gone, if it please your Majesty!

QUEEN: (*Shouts*.) Good! Can you play croquet?

ALICE: (*Shouts*.) Yes!

QUEEN: (*Shouts*.) Come on, then!

ALICE joins the procession.

The White RABBIT appears at her side.

RABBIT: (*Timidly*.) It's – it's a very fine day!

ALICE: Very – where's the Duchess?

RABBIT: (*Quietly*.) Shhh! (*Whispers*.) She's to be executed.

ALICE: What for?

RABBIT: Did you say ‘What a pity!’?

ALICE: No, I don’t think it is. I said: ‘What for?’

RABBIT: She boxed the Queen’s ear.

ALICE laughs.

Sssh! The Queen will hear you –

QUEEN: (*Shouts in a voice of thunder*.) Take your places.

Everybody starts running in all directions, falling over each other. Eventually they settle down and are ready to play. The croquet balls are live hedgehogs and the mallets live flamingos, very difficult to handle. ALICE, who has never observed the technique of Rod Hull with Emu, has the most trouble. She manages to get her flamingo’s body tucked under her arm, with its legs hanging down. But just as she has got its neck straightened out and is going to strike a hedgehog, her flamingo twists itself up and stares in her face and makes her laugh. When she tries again, her hedgehog unrolls and crawls away – or rolls away if this isn’t possible. The doubled-up Soldiers and Gardeners are supposed to act as hoops, but they keep getting up and walking to other parts of the ground. Players argue, steal hedgehogs and all play at once.

ALICE: This is going to be a very difficult croquet game.

QUEEN: (*At random, apparently*.) Off with his head! Off with her head!

ALICE: They’re very fond of beheading people here. It’s a wonder anybody’s left alive.

There is a shimmering in the air, and ALICE looks upwards. A grin forms in the air.

It's the Cheshire Cat. Now I'll have somebody to talk to.

CHESHIRE CAT: How are you getting on? (*Its eyes begin to appear*.)

ALICE: No use talking till its ears appear.

The whole head appears and ALICE puts down her flamingo.

It's a very confusing game.

CHESHIRE CAT: (*Quietly*.) How do you like the Queen?

ALICE: Not at all. She's so extremely – (*ALICE notices the QUEEN just behind her, listening*.) – likely to win, that it's hardly worth trying.

The QUEEN smiles and passes on.

The KING looks at the CHESHIRE CAT's head curiously.

KING: Who are you talking to?

ALICE: A friend of mine – the Cheshire Cat. May I introduce you?

KING: I don't like the look of it. But it may kiss my hand if it likes.

CHESHIRE CAT: I'd rather not.

KING: (*Getting behind ALICE*.) Don't look at me so impertinently!

ALICE: A cat may look at a king. I read that in some book, but I don't remember where.

KING: (*Calls to the QUEEN*.) My dear, please have this cat removed.

QUEEN: (*Without looking round*.) Off with his head!

KING: Executioner! Over here!

FIRST SOLDIER, the Ace of Clubs, carrying an axe, strides over to the QUEEN and KING. A silent crowd collects, all looking up at the

Cheshire Cat.

FIRST SOLDIER: Your Majesties, you can't cut off a head unless there's a body to cut it off from. I've never done such a thing before, and I'm not going to begin at my time of life.

KING: Nonsense! Anything with a head can be beheaded.

QUEEN: If it isn't done in less than no time, I'll have everybody executed, all round.

ALICE: The Cat belongs to the Duchess, you'd better ask her about it.

QUEEN: She's in prison. Fetch her here.

FIRST SOLDIER rushes off.

As ALL watch, the CHESHIRE CAT begins to fade away.

By the time FIRST SOLDIER returns with the DUCHESS, it has vanished.

The DUCHESS is now in a very good mood. She takes ALICE's arm and they walk together.

DUCHESS: You can't think how glad I am to see you again, you dear old thing!

ALICE: (*To us*.) I'm glad she's in such a good temper. Perhaps it was only the pepper made her so savage in the kitchen.

DUCHESS: You're thinking about something, my dear, and that makes you forget to talk to me. I can't tell you just now what the moral of that is, but I'll remember in a bit.

ALICE: Perhaps it hasn't got one.

DUCHESS: Everything's got a moral, if you can only find it. (*The DUCHESS is squeezing up close to ALICE, which makes ALICE very uncomfortable*.)

ALICE: The game's going on rather better now.

DUCHESS: 'Tis so – and the moral of that is – 'Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round!'

ALICE: (*Whispers*.) Somebody said that it's done by everybody minding their own business!

DUCHESS: Which is much the same thing! (*Digging her sharp chin into ALICE's shoulder*.) And the moral of that is – take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves.

ALICE: (*To us*.) She's very fond of finding morals!

DUCHESS: I dare say you're wondering why I don't put my arm round your waist. The reason is, I'm doubtful about your flamingo.

ALICE: He might bite.

DUCHESS: Very true. Flamingoes and mustard both bite. And the moral of that is – birds of a feather flock together.

ALICE: Only mustard isn't a bird.

DUCHESS: (*Much impressed*.) Right, as usual. What a clear way you have of putting things. And the moral of that is – 'Be what you seem to be' – or, if you'd like it put more simply – 'Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that you were or might have been was not otherwise that what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.' Are you thinking again?

ALICE: I've a right to think.

DUCHESS: Just about as much right as pigs have to fly. And the m–

Enter the QUEEN of Hearts, arms folded, frowning like a thunderstorm.

(*In a weak, low voice*.) A fine day, your Majesty!

QUEEN: (*Bellows*.) I give you fair warning. You must be off or your head must be off! Take your choice!

The DUCHESS scuttles off.

(*Wields her flamingo*.) On with the game! (*QUEEN and ALICE return to the croquet game where other GUESTS have been resting on the ground, taking advantage of the QUEEN's absence.*) Up you get, back to the game or it's off with your heads. (*The game resumes – a choreographed chaos with the QUEEN harassing all the other players*.) Off with his head! Off with her head!

Those she sentences are arrested by SOLDIERS, who have to leave off being croquet hoops to do so. Soon all except the KING, the QUEEN and ALICE are in custody and no hoops are left.

Have you seen the Mock Turtle yet?

ALICE: No, I don't even know what a Mock Turtle is.

QUEEN: It's the thing Mock Turtle Soup is made from. Come on. (*She leads ALICE to where a GRYPHON is reclining in the sun.*) Ah, there's the Gryphon! Lazybones! Take this young lady to the Mock Turtle. I must go and watch the executions. (*Exit QUEEN*.)

GRYPHON: (*Stretching and rubbing his eyes.*) It's all her imagination. They never executes nobody, you know.

ALICE: Excuse me, but what's a Gryphon?

GRYPHON: I am. Come on! There's the Mock Turtle, moaning as usual!

GRYPHON takes ALICE by the hand and leads her to where the MOCK TURTLE sits on a little ledge of rock, sighing deeply.

GRYPHON: This here young lady wants for to know your history, she do.

MOCK TURTLE: Sit down, both of you – don't speak till I've finished.

ALICE and GRYPHON sit down and wait. Pause.

Once I was a real turtle.

Pause.

GRYPHON: Hjckrrh!

MOCK TURTLE: (*Sighing*.) When we were very little, we went to school in the sea. Our master was an old turtle – we used to call him Tortoise –

ALICE: Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn't one?

MOCK TURTLE: (*Angrily*.) We called him Tortoise, because he taught us. We went to school each day – and I took the regular courses. We began with Reeling and Writhing. Then all the different branches of Arithmetic – Ambition, Distraction, Uglification and Derision.

ALICE: What else did you have to learn?

MOCK TURTLE: Well, there was Mystery. Ancient and Modern Mystery.

GRYPHON: (*After awkward pause*.) That's enough about lessons – tell her about the dancing!

MOCK TURTLE: You may not have lived much under the sea –

ALICE: Not much –

MOCK TURTLE: And perhaps you never even met a lobster –

ALICE: I once tasted – (*Corrects herself*.) – No, never.

MOCK TURTLE: So you can have no idea what a delightful thing is a Lobster Quadrille!

GRYPHON: Lobster Quadrille!

ALICE: No, indeed. What sort of dance is it?

GRYPHON: Why, you first form into a line along the sea-shore –

MOCK TURTLE: Two lines! Seals, turtles, salmon and so on. Then, when you've cleared all the jelly-fish out of the way –

GRYPHON: – that generally takes some time –

MOCK TURTLE: – you advance twice –

GRYPHON: – each with a lobster as a partner!

MOCK TURTLE: Of course. Advance twice, set to partners –

GRYPHON: – change lobsters and retire in the same order.

MOCK TURTLE: Then you throw –

GRYPHON: (*Bounding in the air*.) – the lobsters!

MOCK TURTLE: – as far out to sea as you can –

GRYPHON: (*Screams*.) – swim after them!

MOCK TURTLE: (*Capering wildly*.) Turn a somersault in the sea!

GRYPHON: Change lobsters again!

MOCK TURTLE: Back to land and that's your first figure.

GRYPHON and MOCK TURTLE, who have been jumping about madly, sit down sadly and quietly and look at ALICE.

ALICE: It must be a very pretty dance.

MOCK TURTLE: Come on! Let's try it!

GRYPHON: What about lobsters?

MOCK TURTLE: (*Incredulously*.) Who needs lobsters?

The MOCK TURTLE, GRYPHON and ALICE dance and sing the Lobster Quadrille.

MOCK TURTLE: (*Sings*.)

'Will you walk a little faster?' said a whiting to a snail.
'There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's treading on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle – will you come and join the dance?'

ALL: (*Sing*.)

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?

GRYPHON: (*Sings*.)

'You can really have no notion how delightful it will be
When they take us up and throw us, with the lobsters, out to sea!'
But the snail replied, 'Too far, too far!' and gave a look askance –
Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he would not join the dance.

ALL: (*Sing*.)

Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.

MOCK TURTLE: (*Sings*.)

'What matters it how far we go?' his scaly friend replied.
'There is another shore, you know, upon the other side.

The further off from England the nearer is to France –
Then turn not pale, beloved snail, but come and join the dance.'

ALL: (*Sing*.)
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?

ALICE: Thank you, it's a very interesting dance. But if I'd been the whiting, I'd have said to the porpoise: 'Keep back, please: we don't want you with us!'

MOCK TURTLE: They were obliged to have him. No wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise.

ALICE: Don't you mean 'purpose'?

MOCK TURTLE: (*Offended*.) I mean what I say.

GRYPHON: (*Smoothing things over*.) Shall we try another figure of the Lobster Quadrille? Or would you like the Mock Turtle to sing you a song?

ALICE: Oh, a song please.

GRYPHON: Hm! No accounting for tastes! Sing her Turtle
Soup will you, old fellow?

MOCK TURTLE: (*Sighs deeply and sings.*)
Beautiful soup, so rich and green,
Waiting in a hot tureen!
Who for such dainties would not stoop?
Soup of the evening, beautiful soup!
Soup of the evening, beautiful soup!

MOCK TURTLE/GRYPHON: (*Sing*.)

Beau-ootiful soo-oop!
Beau-ootiful soo-oop!
Soo-oop of the e-e-evening,
Beautiful, beautiful soup!

Beautiful soup! Who cares for fish,
Game, or any other dish?
Who would not give all else for two p –
'ennyworth only of beautiful soup?
Pennyworth only of beautiful soup?

ALL: (*Sing*.) Beau-ootiful soo-oop!
Beau-ootiful soo-oop!
Soo-oop of the e-e-evening,
Beautiful, beauti-ful soup!

GRYPHON: Chorus again!

A trumpet blast, off.

RABBIT: (*Scurrying across the stage and out.*) Dear me! The trial's beginning!

GRYPHON: The trial! Any minute.

ALICE: But whose trial?

GRYPHON: Come on!

Exit GRYPHON pulling ALICE by the hand. Behind them the MOCK TURTLE hasn't notice developments.

MOCK TURTLE: (*Sings*.) Soo-oop of the e-e-evening, Beautiful, beautiful soup!

Scene 10: The Royal Court

The KING and QUEEN of Hearts are seated on their throne. The KING wears a crown on top of his judge's wig. The KNAVE, in chains, is escorted into the dock by TWO and FIVE. Near the KING, the White RABBIT stands, wearing a tabard, a trumpet in one hand and a scroll in the other. In the middle of the court is the glass table with a dish of scarlet jam tarts upon it. There is a jury-box crowded with creatures and people – the FROG-FOOTMAN, the FISH-FOOTMAN, the MOUSE, MAGPIE, CANARY, DUCK, LORY, EAGLET, FATHER WILLIAM, YOUTH, FIVE and DUCHESS. Enter the GRYPHON with ALICE, who notices the tarts.

ALICE: I wish they'd get the trial done and hand round the refreshments. Oh, that's the judge, because of his wig. And there's the jury-box full of jurors. (*The JURY are busily writing on slates. To the GRYPHON*.) They can't have anything to write yet, before the trial begins.

GRYPHON: (*Whispers*.) They're writing down their names, for fear they'll forget them.

ALICE: (*Loudly*.) Stupid things!

RABBIT: Silence in court!

KING puts on spectacles and looks round to see who's talking.

JURORS: (*Scribbling on slates*.) Stupid things!

MOUSE: (*To neighbour*.) How do you spell stupid?

KING: Herald, read the accusation.

RABBIT blows a blast on his trumpet, unrolls scroll.

RABBIT: (*Sings from scroll, ALL joining in quietly*.)

The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts
All on a summer day.

The Knave of Hearts, he stole those tarts
And took them clean away.

The King of Hearts called for the tarts
And beat the Knave full sore.
The Knave of Hearts brought back the tarts
And vowed he'd steal no more.

KING: (*To JURY*.) Consider your verdict!

RABBIT: Not yet! Not yet! There's lots to come before that.

QUEEN: Call the first witness!

RABBIT: (*Blows trumpet*.) Call the Mad Hatter!

VOICES: (*Receding into the far distance*.) Call the Mad Hatter!
Call the Mad Hatter! Call the Mad Hatter! Call the Hat Mad!

Enter the Mad HATTER, followed by the March HARE arm in arm with the DORMOUSE. The HATTER has a teacup in one hand and a piece of bread and butter in the other.

HATTER: (*Waving his bread at the KING*.) Beg pardon, your Majesty, for bringing these in; but I hadn't quite finished my tea when I was sent for.

KING: You ought to have finished. When did you begin?

HATTER: Fourteenth of March, I think it was.

HARE: Fifteenth –

DORMOUSE: Sixteenth.

KING: (*To the JURY*.) Write that down.

LORY: Fourteenth plus fifteenth plus sixteenth. That comes to five shillings and sevenpence.

KING: (*To HATTER*.) Take off your hat.

HATTER: It isn't mine.

KING: STOLEN! (*Nods to the JURY, who make a note.*)

HATTER: I keep hats to sell. I am a Hatter.

QUEEN: (*Staring intensely*.) He's a Hatter?

KING: Give your evidence and don't be nervous, or I'll have you executed on the spot.

HATTER shakes and nervously bites a large piece out of his teacup.

HATTER: I'm a poor man, your Majesty, and I hadn't begun my tea, not above a week or so – and what with the bread-and-butter getting so thin – and the twinkling of the tea –

KING: The twinkling of the WHAT? Go on!

HATTER: I'm a poor man –

KING: You're a very poor speaker –

EAGLET: Hooray!

KING: If that's all you know, you may stand down.

HATTER: I can't go no lower. I'm on the floor as it is.

KING: Then sit down.

HATTER: I'd rather finish my tea.

KING: You may go.

HATTER rushes out.

QUEEN: And take his head off outside.

RABBIT: Too late, your Majesty, he's gone and taken his head with him.

KING: Call the next witness!

RABBIT: Call the Cook!

VOICES: Call the Cook! Call the Cook! Call the Cook! Cook the Cauliflower!

Enter the DUCHESS's COOK, carrying her pepperpot. ALL near her have a good sneeze.

KING: Give your evidence.

COOK: Shan't.

RABBIT: Your Majesty must cross-examine this witness.

KING: Well, if I must. What are tarts made of?

COOK: Pepper, mostly.

DORMOUSE: (*Sleepily*.) Pepper and treacle.

QUEEN: Collar that Dormouse! Behead that Dormouse! Pinch him! Off with his whiskers!

DORMOUSE is tumbled out of Court.

The COOK vanishes.

KING: Where's that Cook? Never mind.

ALICE: I wonder who's the next witness.

RABBIT: (*Blows trumpet*.) You are!

VOICES: You are!

ALICE: I'm here!

KING: What do you know about this business?

ALICE: Nothing.

KING: Nothing whatever?

ALICE: Nothing whatever.

KING: That's very important.

RABBIT: (*Respectfully, but making faces at the KING*.)
Unimportant, your Majesty means, of course.

KING: Unimportant, of course, I meant. (*Mutters to himself.*)
Important – unimportant. Unimportant – important.

JURY: (*Mutter as they write it down.*) Unimportant. Important.

KING: Consider your verdict.

Suddenly a large envelope is passed from paw to claw to hand around the court and ends up with the White RABBIT.

RABBIT: (*Holding up the envelope*.) It seems to be a letter, written by the prisoner – to somebody.

KING: Is it in the prisoner's handwriting?

RABBIT: No it's not.

JURY look puzzled.

KING: He must have imitated somebody else's writing.

JURY brighten up.

KNAVE: Please your Majesty, I didn't write it and they can't prove I did.
There's no name signed at the end.

KING: You must have meant some mischief or you'd have signed your name like an honest man.

Applause.

QUEEN: That proves he's guilty.

ALICE: It proves nothing of the sort. Why, you don't even know what the letter's about.

KING: Read it.

RABBIT: Where shall I begin?

KING: (*Gravely*.) Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end. Then – stop.

RABBIT: (*Sings meaningfully*.)

They told me you had been to her,
And mentioned me to him:
She gave me a good character,
But said I could not swim.
Begin at the beginning –
Go on until you get to the end.

He sent them word I had not gone
(We know it to be true.):
If she should push the matter on,
What would become of you?
So begin at the beginning –
Go on until you get to the end.

Don't let him know she liked them best
For this must ever be

A secret, kept from all the rest
Between yourself and me.

ALL: (*Sing*.) Begin at the beginning
Go on until you get to the end –
Begin at the beginning
Go on until you get to the end.

KING: (*Rubbing his hands*.) That's the most important piece of evidence so far.

ALICE: Excuse me, but I'm suddenly very hungry.

ALL freeze. ALICE takes a jam tart and bites it. Transformation music. Explosions and flashes. Suddenly ALICE is a giant standing in a model court inhabited by a cast of PUPPETS.

ALICE: If anyone can explain this letter, I'll give him sixpence. I don't believe there's an atom of meaning in it.

JURORS: (*Muttering*.) She doesn't believe there's an atom of meaning in it.

KING: I seem to see some meaning in the words 'said I could not swim'. (*To KNAVE*.) You can't swim, can you?

KNAVE: Do I look like it?

KING: So! Let the Jury consider their verdict.

QUEEN: No, no! Sentence first – verdict afterwards!

ALICE: Stuff and nonsense!

Some PUPPETS collapse, the court shakes.

QUEEN: Hold your tongue!

ALICE: I won't!

QUEEN: Off with her head!

ALICE: (*Towering over the court*.) Who cares for you? You're nothing but a pack of cards!

A pack of cards rises up and comes flying down at ALICE who tries to beat them off like attacking insects. They swarm all around her.

ALICE falls.

Scene 11: The Looking Glass Room

Looking-glass music. A Victorian sitting-room. An evening in winter. The curtains are drawn over tall windows. A blazing fire in the grate. A mantelpiece covered with a decorative cloth edged with tassels. A clock and vase of wax flowers, both under glass domes, stand on the mantelpiece. Very like the Tenniel pictures – but above the mantelpiece shines a large circular mirror. LORINA and EDITH are just finishing building a spectacular house of cards on a chess table. Out of nowhere ALICE staggers past them, knocking over the house of cards and sits on the floor covered with cards.

LORINA/EDITH: Alice!

LORINA: What's the matter?

ALICE: I've had such a curious dream.

EDITH draws the curtains over the windows. Snow is falling beyond the windows.

EDITH: Never mind dreams – look! It's snowing!

End of Act One.

ACT TWO

Scene 1: The Looking Glass Room

Looking-glass music. Curtain rises on the same Victorian sitting-room. An evening in winter. Window-curtains closed. Lights on. A blazing fire in the grate. LORINA and EDITH sit at a small chess table. LORINA is attempting to teach her little sister how to play chess. She has a blackboard with a chessboard sketched on it. ALICE sits in a large chair playing with KITTY, the small black kitten, who is attached to a ball of wool. DINAH the cat, who looks something like the CHESHIRE CAT, is posed as if washing the face of her other kitten, the white SNOWDROP on the floor near the chess game. The cat and the kittens are represented by stuffed toys – ALICE moves KITTY, who has velcroed paws.

LORINA: Pay attention, Edith! Here's the Red Queen, this is the White Queen.

EDITH: Are they good?

LORINA: Queens? They're the most powerful pieces on the chessboard.

ALICE: You wicked Kitty! (*Detaching KITTY from her ball of wool*.) You've been up to mischief all day. You squeaked twice when Dinah washed your face. And you pulled Snowdrop's tail.

EDITH: (*Holding up the White Knight*.) What's this horse for?

LORINA: That's the White Knight. He can move two squares forward and one to the side. Or one forward and two to the side.

EDITH: He sort of wiggles?

LORINA: Well… And he can jump over other pieces.

EDITH: Then he is a horse.

LORINA: You're hopeless.

EDITH: (*Getting down and stomping out*.) You're horrible! And chess is horrible!

LORINA: Alice, give me a game.

ALICE, carrying KITTY, takes EDITH's chair.

ALICE: I know some of the rules. But the pawns muddle me. There are so many, and they're so useless.

LORINA: (*Going to the blackboard and pointing*.) Pawns can be very valuable. Look. It takes eight squares to cross the chessboard. The pawn starts on the second square. It can start by jumping the third into the fourth. Then it moves one by one into the fifth, sixth and seventh – and if it reaches the eighth square – the pawn can turn into a Queen!

ALICE: That never happens when I play!

LORINA: (*Wheedling*.) You can choose red or white.

ALICE: No, let's play at pretending we're kings and queens.

LORINA: (*Standing, angry.*) We can't. There's only two of us.

ALICE: You can be one Queen – I'll be all the rest. Or we could pretend I'm a hungry hyena, and you're a bone!

LORINA: I'm off to bed to read my Tennyson.

ALICE: Goodnight, Lorina! Goodnight, Tennyson!

Exit LORINA in a huff, with her book.

ALICE: (*To KITTY*.) You be the Red Queen, Kitty! Sit up and fold your arms. Do try. (*ALICE takes the Red Queen and sets it up as a model for the Queen*.) If you're not good, I'll put you through into Looking Glass House. How would you like that? I've studied that house, Kitty. First, there's the room you see in the glass – just the same as our drawing-room, but the other way round. I can see into their room when I stand on a chair – all but the bit just behind the fireplace. They have books like ours, only the words go the wrong way. I wish I could climb into Looking Glass House!

ALICE draws the curtains and a large full moon shines in from a sky which looks about to snow. Moonlight falls on the Looking Glass. Music.

CHORUS: (*Sings*.) Moonlight on the mirror
Shining silver ice
Breathing on the mirror
Once and twice and thrice
And move into the
Moonlight of the mirror
Through the Looking Glass.

ALICE walks towards the fire and without any preparation, flies gently up and on to the mantelpiece.

ALICE: Kitty, let's pretend the glass has gone all soft like snow, so that we can climb through it. Why, it's turning into a sort of mist now. It'll be easy enough to push myself through.

ALICE/CHORUS: (*Sing*.) Moonlight on the mirror
Shining silver ice
Breathing on the mirror
Once and twice and thrice

And move into the
Moonlight of the mirror
Through the Looking Glass.

The glass has melted away like a bright silvery mist. ALICE steps through.

Scene 2: The Other Side

The fireplace revolves and ALICE appears through the glass. The positions of the clock and the vase of wax flowers are reversed and the clock has a slightly clownish face on. The fire is blazing. ALICE jumps lightly down into the new room.

ALICE: Good, there's a fire here too. What fun it'll be, when they see me through the glass, and can't get at me! (*She picks up a small red book from the table and opens it, turns the pages, stops*.) I can't read this. It's in some strange language.

The first verse of 'Jabberwocky' in reversed, looking-glass type appears:

'Twas brillig and the slithey toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.
All mimsy were the borogoves
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Of course, it's a looking-glass book. If I hold it up to the mirror, the words will unsquibble themselves. (*She holds the book to the mirror*.)

Lights shimmer, the words change and are now clear.

Enter CHORUS of Toves and Mome Raths.

(*Reads, echoed by CHORUS.*)
Jabberwocky.

’Twas brillig, and the slithey toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.
All mimsy were the borogoves
And the mome raths outgrabe.

As ALICE hesistantly reads this incantation, CHORUS gyres and gimbles as it echoes her words. The scene darkens and changes. FATHER WILLIAM and the YOUTH emerge from the shadows.

FATHER WILLIAM: Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!

YOUTH takes a sword from FATHER WILLIAM, bows to him and strikes a heroic pose.

ALICE: He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought –
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

CHORUS, transfixed in terror, sings zoughishly. The JABBERWOCK, breathing flame and smoke, advances on the YOUTH, burbling.

(*Pluckily*.) And as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

The YOUTH and the JABBERWOCK circle each other. JABBERWOCK turns on ALICE. She dives and dodges, diverting the monster so that the

YOUTH can attack. CHORUS sings battling chords as the claws clutch and the sword swings.

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

YOUTH and JABBERWOCK act this out. YOUTH bears the head back to FATHER WILLIAM.

FATHER WILLIAM: And has thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!

ALICE: He chortled in his joy.

CHORUS: Callooh! Callay!

ALL: (*Sing*.) 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

ALICE closes the book. The YOUTH, FATHER WILLIAM and CHORUS vanish.

ALICE: I'd better hurry or I'll have to go back through the Looking Glass, before I've seen everything. I'll explore the garden first. I'll run downstairs – (*But she finds this impossible*.) no – all right – I'll glide downstairs!

Scene 3: The Garden Path

ALICE finds herself floating downwards in a curve which lands her, staggering, on a garden path. She starts to walk.

ALICE: I'd see the garden far better if I walk to the top of this hill. The path leads straight up – no – (*The path is leading her round many sharp corners.*) It's more like a corkscrew than a path! This should take me to the top – no – I'm back at the house. (*She is face to face with the house.*) I'm not going indoors yet. I'd have to go through the Looking Glass – back home – and that'd be an end to all my adventures. Come on, Alice, up the hill you go! Up and up – I'll do it this time – oh – (*A twist in the path leads her to the door of the house*.) I never saw such a house for getting in the way! (*ALICE stops beside a TIGER-LILY, waving gracefully in the breeze*.) O Tiger-lily. I wish you could talk.

TIGER-LILY: I can, when there's anyone worth talking to.

ALICE: Are there any people in the garden – besides me?

TIGER-LILY: There's one other flower that can move about like you.

ALICE: Another little girl? Like me?

TIGER-LILY: She's the same awkward shape. But redder – here she comes.

The sound of thumping footsteps. ALICE looks round eagerly to see the RED QUEEN – who is now taller than ALICE.

ALICE: It's the Red Queen from our chess set. She's grown a lot.

TIGER-LILY: It's the fresh air that does it.

ALICE: I'll go and meet her.

TIGER-LILY: Then I'd advise you to walk away from her.

ALICE laughs and sets off towards the RED QUEEN. But she finds herself back at the door of the house again.

ALICE: That's no good. Perhaps if I do try walking away…

ALICE does so, and finds herself face to face with the RED QUEEN near the top of the hill.

RED QUEEN: Where are you going? Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers.

ALICE: I seem to have lost my way.

RED QUEEN: What do you mean – *your* way? All the ways around here belong to *me.* (*In a more kindly tone*.) But why did you come out here? Curtsey while you're thinking what to say, it saves time.

ALICE: I only wanted to see the garden, your Majesty –

RED QUEEN: (*Patting ALICE on the head*.) I've seen gardens, compared with which this would be a wilderness.

ALICE: I was trying to reach the top of that hill –

RED QUEEN: I could show you hills, in comparison with which you'd call that a valley.

ALICE: A hill can't be a valley, you know. That would be nonsense.

RED QUEEN: I've heard nonsense compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary.

ALICE curtsies again. ALICE and the RED QUEEN walk to the top of the hill. ALICE surveys the view.

ALICE: What a curious country! All those straight little brooks. And the ground between divided into squares. Yes! It's marked out like a great

chessboard. A great huge game of chess being played – all over the world – if this is the world. I wouldn't mind being a pawn if could join in the game – but of course I'd really like to be a queen.

Chessboard appears with pieces on it.

RED QUEEN: That's easily managed. You'll be the White Queen's Pawn. (*Points to an Alice-Pawn on chessboard*.) Start in the second square. When you get to the eighth square you'll be a queen. (*RED QUEEN takes ALICE's hand and they begin to run.*) Faster! Faster!

ALICE: I can't go any faster.

RED QUEEN: Faster! Don't try to talk. Faster!

ALICE: Are we nearly there?

RED QUEEN: Nearly there? We passed *there* ten minutes ago. Faster! Faster! (*They are almost skimming through the air, feet hardly touching the ground, but suddenly stop. ALICE finds herself sitting on the ground*.) Take a little rest.

ALICE: I do believe we've been under this tree the whole time!

RED QUEEN: Why not?

ALICE: In our country, if you run very fast for a long time – you generally get to somewhere else.

RED QUEEN: That's a slow sort of country. Hereabouts it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast.

ALICE: I'd rather not try. I'm happy to stay here – but I'm hot and thirsty.

RED QUEEN: I know what you need! Biscuits!

White RABBIT bicycles on, takes a large biscuit out of a shoulder-bag, gives it to ALICE. Or he could be on a scooter.

ALICE: (*Taking it reluctantly*.) It looks a bit dry.

RABBIT: (*Indignantly*.) It's a water biscuit. Can't stop, your Majesty, the bishops are starving, I have to take them this sack of ginger beer. (*RABBIT cycles off*.)

RED QUEEN: How's your biscuit?

ALICE: Very refreshing, thank you.

RED QUEEN: Thirst quenched, I hope? On your way! We'll meet in the eighth square. Then we shall be queens together, and it's all feasting and fun!

ALICE curtsies. After another yard, the RED QUEEN stops and turns.

Speak in French when you can't think of the English for a thing. Turn out your toes as you walk. And remember who you are! (*RED QUEEN walks on, stops and turns again*.) Goodbye! (*And the RED QUEEN vanishes*.)

ALICE: I'll never remember all that. I'll just run down this hill and jump over the first little brook.

ALICE runs down the hill and jumps the brook. Brook-jumping music. The White Queen's Pawn moves two squares forwards on the chessboard.

Scene 4: The Railway Carriage

Magical change to the inside of a railway carriage. ALICE is sitting among a crowd of people and creatures. On the seat opposite is a GENTLEMAN in a white paper suit and hat, a GOAT, a BEETLE and, concealed in a

travelling blanket, a HORSE. A Railway GUARD puts his head in through the window.

GUARD: Tickets please!

All PASSENGERS except ALICE hold out tickets which are about the same size as the ticket-holders.

Now then! Show your ticket, child!

CHORUS: Don't keep him waiting, child! His time is worth a thousand pounds a minute!

ALICE: (*Frightened*.) I'm afraid I haven't got one. There wasn't a ticket office where I came from.

CHORUS: There wasn't room for one where she came from. The land there is worth a thousand pounds an inch!

GUARD: Don't make excuses. You should have bought one from the engine-driver.

The GUARD inspects ALICE, first with a telescope, then with a microscope, then through opera-glasses.

CHORUS: The man that drives the engine. The smoke alone is worth a thousand pounds a puff.

ALICE: I don't know what to say.

CHORUS: Best say nothing at all. Language is worth a thousand pounds a word.

ALICE: I'll dream about a thousand pounds tonight.

GUARD: (*Concluding his examination of ALICE.*) You're travelling the wrong way. (*GUARD shuts the window and disappears.*)

GENTLEMAN: A child ought to know which way she's going, even if she doesn't know her own name.

GOAT: (*Shutting his eyes, speaks loudly*.) She ought to know her way to the ticket office, even if she doesn't know her alphabet!

BEETLE: She'll have to go back from here as luggage!

GENTLEMAN: (*Leaning forward to ALICE*.) You should take a return ticket every time the train stops.

ALICE: I shan't! I don't belong to this railway journey at all!

HORSE: (*Hoarsely*.) Change engines – (*Coughs*.)

ALICE: That sounds like a horse.

Train whistle screams, everybody jumps up in alarm.

HORSE goes to window, looks out and turns.

HORSE: Good! There's a brook we have to jump over. Into the fourth square!

ALICE: I'm not used to trains jumping.

HORSE: Here we go!

ALL jump as the train jumps and ALICE hangs on to the GOAT's beard. Whoosh and a crash and flashes.

Brook-jumping music.

The White Queen's Pawn advances another square on the chessboard.

Scene 5: The Wood

ALICE finds herself sitting quietly under the chestnut tree on the edge of a wood. GUARD, with whistle and green flag, appears beside her.

GUARD: End of the line, miss. You'll have to walk on your legs from here. Down through that wood where things have no names. (*Train whistle*.) I'm off, or I'll miss my train. (*Exit, waving flag and blowing whistle*.)

ALICE: It's getting cold and dark. (*ALICE begins to walk*.) I must keep on to the eighth square. The wood where things have no names. What'll happen to my name? I don't want to lose it – they'd give me another, probably an ugly one. It's cool and shady under this – under this, you know. (*ALICE puts her hand on a tree trunk*.) What does this thing call itself? I do believe it's got no name. It's really happened! So who am I? I must remember! I must! L, I know my name begins with an L!

Enter a FAWN, it looks up at ALICE, not frightened at all.

ALICE: (*Trying to stroke the FAWN*.) Here then!

FAWN: (*Holding back, in a sweet voice*.) What do you call yourself?

ALICE: I wish I knew! Nothing, just now. What's your name? That might help.

FAWN: I'll tell you, if you'll come a little further. I can't remember here.

ALICE clasps her arms lovingly round the neck of the FAWN and they walk on together through the wood to the sounds of gentle music. They come to the end of the wood. Suddenly the FAWN gives a bound into the air and shakes itself free from ALICE's arms.

(*Delighted*.) I'm a Fawn! I'm a Fawn! (*Alarmed*.) Oh no! You're a human child! (*FAWN bolts into the distance and vanishes*.)

ALICE: Goodbye! (*Sadly*.) I didn't want to lose you. But at least I know my name now. Alice – Alice – I won't forget it again. Now, which signpost should I follow? (*ALICE reads signposts which have apparently sprouted from the tree*.) 'TO TWEEDLEDUM'S HOUSE.' Hmm. 'TO THE HOUSE OF TWEEDLEDEE.' I do believe they live in the same house. I'll call on them, say How d'you do? and ask them the way out of the wood.

Scene 6: Tweedledum and Tweedledee

Turning a corner ALICE sees the same chestnut tree, now bearing conkers. Under the tree stand TWEEDLEDUM and TWEEDLEDEE. One has 'DUM' on his costume, the other has 'DEE'.

TWEEDLEDUM: If you think we're waxworks, you ought to pay. Waxworks weren't made to be looked at for nothing. Nohow!

TWEEDLEDEE: Contrariwise, if you think we're alive, you ought to speak.

ALICE: (*Suppressing giggles*.) I'm sorry. I can't help it, it's that old song –

ALICE/CHORUS: (*Sing*.) Tweedledum and Tweedledee
Agreed to have a battle;
For Tweedledum said Tweedledee
Had spoiled his nice new rattle.

Just then flew down a monstrous crow
As black as a tar-barrel;
Which frightened both our heroes so
They quite forgot their quarrel.

TWEEDLEDUM: You've begun wrong! The first thing to say is How d'ye do? and shake hands.

The TWINS hug each other then hold out their free hands to ALICE. This soon turns into a handshake routine. It stops suddenly.

TWEEDLEDEE: You like poetry?

ALICE: Ye-es, well – some poetry.

TWEEDLEDEE: What shall I recite?

TWEEDLEDUM: (*Giving him a hug*.) The Walrus and the Carpenter is the longest.

TWEEDLEDEE: (*Sings*.) The sun was shining –

ALICE: Could you tell me first which road leads to the fifth square? –

TWEEDLEDEE: (*Smiles at her and sings.*)

The sun was shining on the sea,
Shining with all his might:
He did his very best to make
The billows smooth and bright –
And this was odd, because it was
The middle of the night.

TWEEDLEDUM: (*Sings*.) The moon was shining sulkily,
Because she thought the sun
Had got no business to be there
After the day was done –
'It's very rude of him,' she said,
'To come and spoil the fun!

TWEEDLEDUM/TWEEDLEDEE: (*Sing*.)

The sea was wet as wet could be,
The sands were dry as dry.
You could not see a cloud, because
No cloud was in the sky:
No birds were flying overhead –
There were no birds to fly
Alas there were no birds to fly.

Music continues as the WALRUS and the CARPENTER enter.

WALRUS: (*Sings*.) The Walrus –

CARPENTER: (*Sings*.) – and the Carpenter

WALRUS/CARPENTER: (*Sing*.) Were walking close at hand.

CARPENTER: (*Sings*.) Weeping like anything to see
Such quantities of sand.

WALRUS/CARPENTER: (*Sing*.)

‘If this were only cleared away,’
They said, ‘It would be grand!’

WALRUS: (*Sings*.) ‘If seven maids with seven mops
Swept it for half a year,
Do you suppose,’ the Walrus said,
‘That they could get it clear?’

CARPENTER: (*Sings*.) ‘I doubt it,’ said the Carpenter,
and shed a bitter tear.

Enter some timid young OYSTERS, hand in hand.

WALRUS: (*Sings*.) O Oysters, come and walk with us!
I heartily beseech.
A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
Along the briny beach.
We cannot do with more than four,
To give a hand to each.

OLD OYSTER: (*Sings*.) The eldest Oyster looked at him,
But never a word he said:
The eldest Oyster winked his eye,
And shook his heavy head –
Meaning to say he did not choose
To leave the oyster-bed.

TWEEDLEDEE: (*Sings*.) But four young oysters hurried up,
All eager for the treat:
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,
Their shoes were clean and neat –
And this was odd, because, you know,
They hadn't any feet.

TWEEDLEDUM: (*Sings*.) Four other Oysters followed them,
And yet another four;

TWEEDLEDUM/TWEEDLEDEE: (*Sing*.)
And thick and fast they came at last,
And more and more and more –
All hopping through the frothy waves
And scrambling to the shore.

WALRUS/CARPENTER: (*Sing*.) The Walrus and the Carpenter
Walked on a mile or so

And then they rested on a rock,
Conveniently low:
And all the little Oysters stood
And waited in a row.

WALRUS: (*Sings*.) ‘The time has come,’ the Walrus said,
‘To talk of many things:
Of shoes – and ships – and sealing-wax –
Of cabbages – and kings –
And why the sea is boiling hot –
And whether pigs have wings.’

OYSTERS: (*Sings*.) ‘But wait a bit,’ the Oysters cried,
‘Before we have our chat;
For some of us are out of breath
And all of us are fat!’

CARPENTER: (*Sings*.) ‘No hurry,’ said the Carpenter.

OYSTERS: (*Sings*.) They thanked him much for that.

WALRUS: (*Sings*.) ‘A loaf of bread,’ the Walrus said,
‘Is what we chiefly need.
Pepper and vinegar besides
Are very good indeed.
Now if you’re ready, Oysters dear,
We can begin to feed.’

OYSTERS: (*Sings*.) ‘But not on us!’ the Oysters cried,
Turning a little blue.
‘After such kindness, that would be
A dismal thing to do.’

WALRUS:(*Sings*.) ‘The night is fine,’ the Walrus said,
‘Do you admire the view?

The OYSTERS are surrounded and are being consumed.

It was so kind of you to come!
And you are very nice!’

CARPENTER: (*Sings*.) The Carpenter said nothing but –
‘Cut us another slice!
I wish you were not quite so deaf –
I’ve had to ask you twice!’

WALRUS: (*Sings*.) ‘It seems a shame,’ the Walrus said,
‘To play them such a trick,
After we’ve brought them out so far
And made them trot so quick!’

CARPENTER: (*Sings*.) The Carpenter said nothing but –
‘The butter’s spread too thick!’

WALRUS: (*Sings*.) ‘I weep for you,’ the Walrus said,
‘I deeply sympathise.’
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

CARPENTER: (*Sings*.) O, Oysters, from your oyster-bed
You’ve had a pleasant run!
Shall we be trotting home again?

TWEEDLEDEE: (*Sings*.) But answer came there none –

TWEEDLEDUM: (*Sings*.) And this was scarcely odd, because –

TWEEDLEDUM/TWEEDLEDEE: (*Sing*.)
They'd eaten every one.

WALRUS and CARPENTER, replete, lie down to sleep.

OLD OYSTER: (*Sings*.) The Carpenter he ceased to sob,
The Walrus ceased to weep;
They'd finished all the oysters
And they laid them down to sleep –
And of their craft and cruelty
The punishment to reap.

Behold, the Ghosts of the Young Oysters, bent on revenge!

Enter the GHOSTS of the OYSTERS, who sing and attack the WALRUS and the CARPENTER.

GHOST OYSTERS: (*Sing*.)
The carpenter is sleeping, his nose is red as jam,
The walrus snores beside him – his tears were all a sham!
Let oysters rock your cradle and lull you into rest;
And if that will not do it, we'll stamp upon your chest!
We'll stamp upon your chest!
We'll stamp upon your chest!
Bad walrus and bad carpenter
We'll stamp upon your chest!

OYSTERS attack.

Exit WALRUS and CARPENTER pursued by the GHOST OYSTERS.

ALICE: I like the Walrus best. He was a little sorry for the poor oysters.

TWEEDLEDEE: He ate more than the Carpenter, though.

ALICE: (*Indignantly*.) Then I like the Carpenter best – he didn't eat as many.

TWEEDLEDUM: He ate as many as he could get.

ALICE: Well, they were both very unpleasant characters. (*A sound rather like a steam engine or a wild beast*.) Are there lions or tigers round here?

TWEEDLEDEE: It's only the Red King snoring.

TWEEDLEDEE/TWEEDLEDUM: Come and look at him!

They lead ALICE over to where the RED KING is sleeping under the tree.

TWEEDLEDUM: Isn't he a lovely sight?

TWEEDLEDEE: What do you think he's dreaming about?

ALICE: Nobody can guess that.

TWEEDLEDEE: Why, about you! (*Claps his hands*.) If he stopped dreaming about you, where would you be?

ALICE: Where I am now, of course.

TWEEDLEDEE: Nohow! You'd be nowhere! You're only a sort of thing in his dream!

TWEEDLEDUM: If that there King woke up, you'd go out – bang! – like a candle.

ALICE: If I'm only something in his dream, what are you?

TWEEDLEDUM: Ditto.

TWEEDLEDEE: (*Loudly*.) Ditto, ditto!

ALICE: Shhh! You'll wake the King. It's coming on very dark. Is it going to rain?

TWEEDLEDUM: (*Spreading an umbrella over himself and DEE*.) Not under here. Nohow.

ALICE: But it may rain out here?

TWEEDLEDEE: It may – if it chooses. We've no objection. Contrariwise.

ALICE: (*To us*.) Selfish things!

TWEEDLEDUM: (*Jumping out and grabbing her wrist.*) Do you see that? (*Agitated, pointing under the tree at a white wooden football-type rattle.*) I knew it! Spoiled, of course!

TWEEDLEDEE sits on the ground and tries to hide under the umbrella.

ALICE: It's only an old rattle.

TWEEDLEDUM: It's not old! It's new, I tell you – I bought it yesterday – my nice new RATTLE!

TWEEDLEDEE is trying to fold up the umbrella, with himself inside it.

You agree to have a battle?

TWEEDLEDEE: (*Sulkily*.) Only if she helps us dress up.

The TWINS fetch a huge hamper full of things such as bolsters, blankets, hearth-rugs, tablecloths, dish-covers and coal-scuttles.

TWEEDLEDUM: All these things has to go on, somehow.

ALICE: Come on, then. (*She piles, ties and pins the objects on them like silly armour*.)

TWEEDLEDEE: The bolster goes round my head.

ALICE attaches it.

To keep my head from being cut off. You know, it's one of the most serious things that can possibly happen in a battle – to get your head cut off.

ALICE laughs, but manages to turn it into a cough.

You can watch the fight. But you'd better not come too close. I hit everything I can see – when I get excited.

TWEEDLEDUM: I hit everything within reach, whether I can see it or not!

ALICE: You must hit the trees pretty often.

TWEEDLEDUM: I don't suppose there'll be a tree left standing by the time we've finished.

TWINS take conker maces – giant conkers still in their green spiked cases on stalks – from the tree to use as clubs.

ALICE: (*To us*.) I wish that monstrous crow would come!

Suddenly it's getting very dark.

ALICE: That thick black cloud's travelling fast! I think it's got wings!

TWEEDLEDUM: It's the Crow!

TWEEDLEDEE: The Crow!

The TWINS take to their heels. Exit pursued by an enormous CROW, with great dark wings.

ALICE hides under the tree.

ALICE: (*To us*.) It can't get me here. But those great wings are stirring up a hurricane. There goes somebody's shawl.

ALICE catches a flying white shawl in mid-air. Next moment the WHITE QUEEN comes running wildly through the wood with both arms stretched out as if she is flying.

(*Helping WHITE QUEEN with her shawl*.) May I help you? (*To us*.) Everything's crooked, and she's all over pins.

WHITE QUEEN: (*Sadly*.) I don't know what's the matter with that shawl. I've pinned it here, and I've pinned it there, but there's no pleasing it.

ALICE: (*Putting it right as far as she can*.) And what a state your hair is in!

WHITE QUEEN: My hairbrush got tangled up in it! And my comb vanished again.

ALICE: (*Tidying her.*) That's better! But you really need a lady's-maid.

WHITE QUEEN: The job's yours! Twopence a week, and jam every other day.

ALICE: (*Laughing*.) I don't want a job – and I don't like jam.

WHITE QUEEN: It's very good jam.

ALICE: Well, I don't want any today.

WHITE QUEEN: You couldn't have it if you did. The rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday – but never jam today.

ALICE: It must sometimes come to 'jam today'.

WHITE QUEEN: No. It's jam every other day. Today isn't any other day.

ALICE: It's very confusing!

WHITE QUEEN: That's the effect of living backwards. It makes you a bit giddy at first –

ALICE: Living backwards?

WHITE QUEEN: – but there's one great advantage – your memory works both ways.

ALICE: Mine only works one way. I can't remember things before they happen.

WHITE QUEEN: That's a poor sort of memory.

ALICE: What do you remember best?

WHITE QUEEN: Oh, things that happened the week after next. (*Sticking a large piece of plaster on her finger*.) There's a mistake somewhere – (*Screaming*.) Oh, oh, oh! (*Shakes her hand about*.) My finger's bleeding!

ALICE: What's the matter? Have you pricked your finger?

WHITE QUEEN: Not yet, but I'm just going to – oh, oh, oh! As soon as I try to fasten my shawl again. Oh, oh! (*Clutches at her brooch and tries to clasp it again*.)

ALICE: Take care! It's all crooked.

ALICE tries to intervene, but the pin slips and the WHITE QUEEN pricks her finger.

WHITE QUEEN: (*Smiling*.) The pin! That explains the bleeding. That's the way things happen here.

ALICE: Why don't you scream now the pin's pricked you?

WHITE QUEEN: I've done all my screaming. Why do it again? How old are you?

The sky is becoming lighter.

ALICE: Seven and a half exactly.

WHITE QUEEN: I believe you. Now I'll give you something to believe. I'm just one hundred and one, five months and a day.

ALICE: I can't believe that!

WHITE QUEEN: Try again: draw a deep breath and shut your eyes.

ALICE: (*Laughs*.) It's no use. I can't believe impossible things.

WHITE QUEEN: You need to practice. I always do it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast. There goes my shawl again!

A sudden gust of wind blows the shawl over a little brook.

The WHITE QUEEN spreads her arms and flies after it, just catching it as she crosses the brook.

Got it! I'll pin it on again, all by myself!

Brook-crossing music and on the chessboard, the Alice-Pawn advances to the fifth square as ALICE leaps the brook.

Scene 7: The Shop

ALICE twirls around and sees the WHITE QUEEN seems to have wrapped herself up in wool.

WHITE QUEEN: Oh much better! Much be-etter! Be-e-etter! Be-e-eh!

By now she is bleating. ALICE rubs her eyes and stares. The WHITE QUEEN has turned into a SHEEP in an armchair, knitting and peering through large spectacles from behind the counter of a little dark shop.

SHEEP: What do you want to buy?

ALICE: I don't know yet. I'd like to look around.

SHEEP: You can't look all round you – unless you've got eyes in the back of your head. (*Returns to her knitting*.)

ALICE: (*To us*.) Very odd. Whenever I look hard at a shelf, to see what's on it, that shelf's always empty – but all the others are crammed full. Things flow about so here! (*ALICE stares all around*.)

SHEEP: You make me giddy, spinning around like a top.

The SHEEP is now knitting with fourteen pairs of needles.

ALICE: (*To us.*) How can she knit with so many needles? She looks like a woolly porcupine.

SHEEP: (*Handing ALICE a pair of knitting needles*.) Can you row?

ALICE: A little – but not on land – and not with needles.

SHEEP: (*Taking up another pair of needles*.) Feather!

By now ALICE and the SHEEP are in a boat on a river, each pulling at a pair of oars.

Feather your oars! Or you'll catch a crab! Feather!

ALICE: Why feather? I'm not a bird!

SHEEP: You're a little goose.

They row on, till ALICE's oar appears to be stuck, the handle catches her under the chin and she falls backwards.

You caught a fine crab! Now, what do you want to buy?

ALICE looks around – they are back again in the shop.

ALICE: I'd like to buy an egg, please.

SHEEP: Fivepence farthing for one – twopence for two.

ALICE: (*Taking out her purse.*) Are two are cheaper than one?

CHESHIRE CAT: (*Appearing*.) If you buy two, you have to eat them both.

ALICE: Then I'll have one.

CHESHIRE CAT: Suit yourself. (*Fades away*.)

SHEEP takes her money and puts it away in a box.

SHEEP: I never put things into people's hands, that would never do – you must get it for yourself.

SHEEP retreats to the far end of the shop and sets the egg upright on a shelf. Light shines on the egg, which seems to retreat as ALICE advances on it in slow motion. The SHEEP vanishes and the shop is melting away.

ALICE: (*To herself.*) The egg seems to get further away the more I walk towards it. The shop's full of trees. And here's another little brook – I'd better jump it.

Brook-jumping music as ALICE leaps over the brook.

The chessboard shows the Alice-Pawn advance to the sixth square.

Scene 8: A Wall

ALICE moves into the sunlight. In front of her is a high, narrow wall. On top of it, legs crossed, sits HUMPTY DUMPTY.

ALICE (*To us*.) It can't be anyone else – Humpty Dumpty. And he's exactly like an egg!

HUMPTY: (*Looking away from ALICE*.) It's *very* provoking to be called an egg – *very* !

ALICE: (*Gently*.) I said you *looked* like an egg, sir. Some eggs are very pretty.

HUMPTY: Some people have no more sense than a baby!

ALICE: (*Sings to herself.*) Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall:
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again.

That last line's too long for the song.

HUMPTY: Don't stand moaning to yourself. State your name and business.

ALICE: My *name* is Alice, but –

HUMPTY: That's a stupid name! What does it mean?

ALICE: (*Doubtfully*.) *Must* a name mean something?

HUMPTY: Of course. My name means the shape I am – and a good handsome shape, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.

ALICE: Why do you sit up there all alone?

HUMPTY: Because there's nobody with me! Ask me another.

ALICE: Wouldn't you be safer on the ground? It's a very high wall.

HUMPTY: What tremendously easy riddles you ask! If I ever did fall off – which couldn't happen – but if I did fall – the King promised me – ah, you may well turn pale! The King promised me, with his very own mouth to – to –

ALICE: To send all of his horses and all of his men.

HUMPTY: That's too bad! You've been listening at doors – behind trees – down chimneys – otherwise you couldn't have known that.

ALICE: (*Gently*.) I read it in a book.

HUMPTY: That must have been a book called Great Events In English History. Take a good look at me! I'm one that has spoken to a king, I am: perhaps you'll never see such another. But to show you I'm not proud, you may shake hands with me. (*HUMPTY grins and proffers his hand*.)

ALICE shakes it gently.

ALICE: (*To us*.) If he smiles much more, the ends of his mouth might meet behind his head. What'd happen? His head might drop off.

HUMPTY: Oh yes, all his horses and all his men. They'd pick me up in a minute! Talking of minutes, how old did you say you were?

ALICE: Seven years and six months.

HUMPTY: Wrong! You never said that.

ALICE: I thought you meant: How old are you?

HUMPTY: If I'd meant that, I'd have said it. Hm, seven years and six months – an uncomfortable sort of age. Now if you'd asked my advice, I'd have said: Leave off at seven – but it's too late now.

ALICE: What a beautiful belt you're wearing! At least, what a beautiful bow-tie – no, a belt, I mean – (*to us.*) I wish I knew which is neck and which is waist.

HUMPTY: It is a – most – provoking – thing when a person doesn't know a bow-tie from a belt.

ALICE: It's very ignorant of me.

HUMPTY: It's a bow-tie, my child, a cravat, and a beautiful one, as you say. It's a present from the White King and Queen. They gave it me – for an un-birthday present.

ALICE: What's an un-birthday present?

HUMPTY: A present given when it's not your birthday, of course.

ALICE: I like birthday presents best.

HUMPTY: Huh! How many days in a year?

ALICE: Three hundred and sixty-five.

HUMPTY: So there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-birthday presents. And only one for birthday presents. There's glory for you!

ALICE: I don't know what you mean by 'glory'.

HUMPTY: I meant: 'There's a nice knock-down argument for you!'

ALICE: 'Glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument'.

HUMPTY: When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.

ALICE: You're very clever at explaining words. Would you kindly tell me the meaning of the poem called 'Jabberwocky'?

HUMPTY: I can explain all the poems every invented – and a good many that haven't been invented just yet. Let's hear it.

The first verse of 'Jabberwocky' appears on HUMPTY's wall.

Enter Slithy TOVES, Mome RATHS and BOROGOVES.

ALICE/TOVES/RATHS/BOROGOVES: (*Sing*.)

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Enter the White RABBIT, looking academic, with a pointer, with which he indicates words on the wall as HUMPTY mentions them.

HUMPTY: 'Brillig' means four o'clock in the afternoon – the time when you begin broiling things for dinner.

ALICE: All right. And 'slithy'?

HUMPTY: Slithy is lithe and slimy – you see there are two meanings packed in one word.

ALICE: And what are 'toves'?

HUMPTY: Something like badgers, something like lizards – and something like corkscrews.

RABBIT: (*Pointing*.) Here is a particularly slithy example of a tove. The tove makes its nest under sundials and lives upon cheese.

ALICE: And what's to 'gyre and gimble'?

HUMPTY: To gyre is to go round and round like a gyroscope.
To gimble is to make holes like a gimlet.

ALICE: And ‘the wabe’ is the grass around a sundial, I suppose?

HUMPTY: Exactly so.

RABBIT: It’s called wabe because it goes a long way before it, and a long way behind it –

ALICE: And a long way beyond it on each side.

HUMPTY: Well then – ‘mimsy’ is ‘flimsy and miserable’. And a ‘borogove’ is a thin, shabby-looking bird with its feathers sticking out all round – something like a live mop.

A BOROGOVE shows itself off, mimsily.

ALICE: And ‘mome raths’.

HUMPTY: Well, a ‘rath’ is a sort of green pig.

RABBIT: (*Pointing one out*.) A rath.

HUMPTY: But ‘mome’ – I’m not sure, but I think it’s short for ‘from home’ – meaning that they’d lost their way.

ALICE: And what does ‘outgrabe’ mean?

HUMPTY: Well, ‘outgribing’ is something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle.

RABBIT: May we have a mome rath, please?

A RATH steps forward.

Would you please demonstrate how you outgrabe?

The RATH obliges.

ALICE: Thank you all for helping me.

RABBIT/OTHERS: It has been our pleasure.

White RABBIT bows to her and shepherds out the TOVES, BOROGOVES and RATHS.

ALICE: You are a good explainer.

HUMPTY: I'm even better at poetical singing, if it comes to that.

ALICE: It needn't come to that!

HUMPTY: This piece was written entirely for your amusement.

ALICE: (*Sitting down*.) Thank you.

HUMPTY: (*Sings*.) In winter, when the fields are white,
I sing this song for your delight.
In spring, when woods are getting green.
I'll try to tell you what I mean.

ALICE: Thank you very much.

HUMPTY: (*Sings*.) In summer, when the days are long,
Perhaps you'll understand the song:
In autumn, when the leaves are brown,
Take pen and ink, and write it down.

I sent a message to the fish:
I told them: 'This is what I wish.'
The little fishes of the sea,
They sent an answer back to me.

The little fishes' answer was
'We cannot do it, sir, because – '
I sent to them again to say:
'It will be better to obey.'

The fishes answered with a grin,
'Why what a temper you are in!'
I told them once, I told them twice,
They would not listen to advice.

I took a kettle large and new,
Fit for the deed I had to do.
My heart went hop, my heart went thump,
I filled the kettle at the pump.

Then someone came to me and said,
'The little fishes are in bed.'
I took a corkscrew from the shelf
I went to wake them up myself,

And when I found the door was locked,
I pulled and pushed and kicked and knocked.
And when I found the door was shut,
I tried to turn the handle, but –

ALICE: (*After a pause*.) Is that all?

HUMPTY: That's all. Goodbye.

ALICE: (*Extending her hand for him to shake*.) Goodbye, till we meet again!

HUMPTY: (*Giving her one of his fingers to shake*.) I won't recognise you. You're so exactly like other people.

ALICE: The face is what one goes by, generally.

HUMPTY: Your face is the same as everybody's – two eyes, so – nose in the middle, mouth underneath. Always the same. Now if you had the two

eyes on the same side of the nose – or the mouth at the top – that would help.

ALICE: It wouldn't look nice.

HUMPTY: (*Closing his eyes*.) Wait till you've tried.

ALICE pauses, but HUMPTY's eyes are closed. She walks away quietly.

ALICE: (*To herself.*) Of all the unsatisfactory people I ever met.

The sound of the wall cracking open. An enormous crash. The wall collapsing. Smoke and smashing, squashy noises. Whirling lights. The sound of many galloping horses, many marching soldiers.

ARMY SERGEANT: (*Off.*) F, F, F, I, F! F, F, F, I, F!

SOLDIERS: (*Off.*) F, F, F, I, F! F, F, F, I, F!

Drums and trumpets. ALICE hides under the tree, from which banners and flags sprout. ALICE suddenly notices that the WHITE KING is sitting on the ground beside her, busily writing in his notebook.

WHITE KING: Horses and men! I've sent them all! (*Sees ALICE*.) Did you happen to hear any soldiers just now?

ALICE: Yes, I did. Several hundred, I should think.

WHITE KING: (*Referring to his notebook*.) Four thousand two hundred and seven, precisely. Not counting my two messengers. Look down there. Tell me if you see them.

ALICE: I see nobody on the road.

WHITE KING: I only wish I had such eyes. To be able to see nobody!

ALICE: There's somebody now! But he's very slow, and he makes very curious attitudes!

HAIGHA, one of the WHITE KING's messengers approaches – he is the March HARE dressed up in historical costume, with a bag over his shoulder. He keeps skipping up and down and wriggling like an eel, with his great hands spread out like fans on either side. He assumes fine poses and throws shapes.

WHITE KING: Not at all. He's an Anglo-Saxon messenger – those are Anglo-Saxon attitudes. He only does them when he's happy. His name is Haigha.

[*Note: Haigha rhymes with 'mayor', but it's good to make a gutteral noise with the 'gh' to distinguish the name from 'Hare'.*]

My other messenger's called Hatta. [*Pronounce it 'Hartar'.*]
I must have two – one to come and one to go.

HAIGHA arrives, very out of breath, strikes Anglo-Saxon attitudes and rolls his eyes wildly.

Haigha! Who did you pass on the road?

HAIGHA: Nobody.

WHITE KING: Quite right. This young lady saw him too.
What's happening in town?

HAIGHA: I'll whisper it. (*Puts his hands to his mouth in the shape of a trumpet to get close to the WHITE KING's ear. Suddenly he shouts*.)
THEY'RE AT IT AGAIN!

WHITE KING: You call that a whisper? Do it again and I'll have you buttered!

ALICE: Who's at it again?

HAIGHA: (*Striking big attitude*.) The Lion and the Unicorn!

Enter CHORUS of mixed SOLDIERS and CREATURES.

CHORUS: (*Sing*.)

The lion and the unicorn were fighting for the crown:
The lion beat the unicorn all round the town.
Some gave them white bread, some gave them brown;
Some gave them plum-cake and drummed them out of town!

Exit CHORUS.

ALICE: Are they fighting for the crown now?

WHITE KING: Yes. And the joke is – it's my crown. Here they come! What a furious fight!

Enter an excited CROWD – the Chorus again – surrounding the fighting LION and UNICORN. It's something like a playground fight. HATTA, the other messenger, played by the Mad HATTER, stands casually watching with a cup of tea in one hand and a piece of bread-and-butter in the other.

HAIGHA: (*Whispers to ALICE*.) That's the other messenger, Hatta. He's only just out of prison. He hadn't finished his tea when he was sent in and they only gave them oyster-shells in jail – so he's very hungry and thirsty. (*Puts his arm round HATTA's neck*.)

WHITE KING: Hatta! How are they getting on with the fight?

HATTA: (*Choking on his bread-and-butter*.) Very well. Both been knocked down about eighty-seven times.

ALICE: Will some bring them white bread and some bring them brown soon?

HATTA: It's waiting for 'em already. This is a bit of it as I'm eating.

A gong sounds. CROWD parts. LION and UNICORN stagger out, wiping themselves with towels. The LION is a London boxer – Henry Cooper/Frank Bruno maybe. The UNICORN is Scottish.

WHITE KING: Refreshment time!

HATTA and HAIGHA carry round trays of white and brown bread.

(*To HATTA*.) They won't fight any more today. Go order the drums!

HATTA: Drums? Drums! (*HATTA bounds off like a grasshopper*.)

In the distance the WHITE QUEEN runs, in slow motion, across country.

ALICE: Look – the White Queen, running for all she's worth!

WHITE KING: Some enemy's after her, probably.

ALICE: Aren't you going to run and help her?

WHITE KING: You might as well try to catch a bandersnatch! But I'll make a note about her, if you like – she's a dear good creature. (*Opens his notebook*.) Do you spell creature with a double 'e'?

The UNICORN saunters by with his hands in his pockets.

UNICORN: I had the best of it this time?

WHITE KING: (*Nervously*.) Just about. But you shouldn't run him through with your horn.

UNICORN: It didn't hurt him. (*Sees ALICE, looks at her with some disgust.*) What – is – this?

HAIGHA: A child! (*Big attitude*.) We found it today. Large as life and twice as natural!

UNICORN: A child? I always thought they were fabulous monsters! Is it alive?

HAIGHA: It can talk.

UNICORN: (*Looks dreamily at ALICE*.) Talk, child.

ALICE: I always thought unicorns were fabulous monsters! I never saw a live one before!

UNICORN: Well, now we've seen each other – if you'll believe in me, I'll believe in you. Is that a bargain?

ALICE: Yes.

UNICORN and ALICE shake hands.

UNICORN: (*To the WHITE KING.*) Come, fetch out the plum-cake, old man! None of your brown bread for me!

WHITE KING: (*Mutters*.) Certainly! Certainly! Open the bag!

HAIGHA, like a conjuror, takes a large cake on a dish and a carving knife out of the bag and gives them to ALICE.

The LION approaches looking very tired and sleepy. He blinks at ALICE and speaks in a deep hollow tone like the tolling of a great South London bell.

LION: What's this then?

UNICORN: It's a fabulous monster!

LION: (*Lying down, putting his chin on his paws*.) Hand round the plum-cake, monster. (*To the UNICORN and WHITE KING*.) Now you two. Fair play with the cake, know what I mean?

WHITE KING looks uncomfortable sitting between the two great creatures.

UNICORN: (*Eyeing the WHITE KING's crown*.) We could have a bonnie fight for that crown, now!

LION: I'd win easy.

UNICORN: I'm not so sure.

LION: I beat you all round the town, corkscrew-head!

WHITE KING: (*Trying to stop the quarrel*.) All round the town? Did you go by the old bridge, or the market-place? You get the best view by the bridge.

LION: Dunno. Too much dust to see. The monster's taking its time cutting that cake.

ALICE is trying to cut it up, but having trouble.

ALICE: I've cut lots of slices, but they always join up again.

UNICORN: It's a looking-glass cake. Hand it round first, cut it up afterwards.

ALICE gets up obediently and carries the dish round. The cake divides itself into three pieces as she does so. ALICE returns to her place with the empty dish.

LION: Now cut it.

UNICORN: It's no fair. The monster gave the Lion twice as much as me.

LION: She kept none for herself, anyhow.

WHITE KING: I wish those drummers would start.

Enter DRUMMERS with every conceivable kind of percussion, beating and stomping away all around.

LION and UNICORN begin to retreat.

ALICE puts her hands over her ears and approaches a little brook and jumps over it in terror.

Brook-jumping music. Chessboard shows Alice-Pawn moving on to the seventh square.

ALICE: (*To us.*) If that doesn't drum them out of town, nothing ever will!

Scene 9: The White Knight

All the banners, people and creatures have gone. ALICE sits at the foot of the great tree.

ALICE: (*To us.*) This must be the seventh square. If I'm not dreaming.

A galloping, clanking sound.

Enter the RED KNIGHT, on horseback, brandishing a great club.

RED KNIGHT: Ahoy! Ahoy! Check!

RED KNIGHT gallops up to ALICE. His horse stops suddenly and he tumbles off.

You're my prisoner! (*Remounts*.) I said, you're my –

More galloping, clanking sounds. Enter the WHITE KNIGHT, on horseback, galloping towards ALICE. He is played by the actor who plays DODGSON. He does not look old, but like Dodgson at thirty.

WHITE KNIGHT: Ahoy! Ahoy! Check!

WHITE KNIGHT tumbles off his horse. He remounts. The two KNIGHTS sit staring at each other.

RED KNIGHT: She's my prisoner!

WHITE KNIGHT: So she was, but then I rescued her!

RED KNIGHT: We must fight for her, then.

RED KNIGHT takes up his helmet, which is shaped like a horse's head.

WHITE KNIGHT: (*Donning his own horse-helmet*.) You'll observe the rules of battle, of course?

RED KNIGHT: I always do.

The KNIGHTS, with their clubs held in their arms, start to bang away at each other. They fall off and remount at regular intervals in the fight. ALICE tries to get behind the tree.

ALICE: (*To us.*) The main rule of battle seems to be – if one knight hits the other, he knocks him off his horse, but if he misses, he tumbles off himself.

Both KNIGHTS fall off at the same time. They stand, bow to each other and shake hands. The RED KNIGHT mounts his horse and gallops off.

WHITE KNIGHT: A glorious victory, wasn't it?

ALICE: I don't know. I don't want to be anybody's prisoner. I want to be a queen.

WHITE KNIGHT: So you will, when you've crossed the next brook. I'll see you safe to the end of this wood – then I must go back. That's the end of my move.

ALICE: Thank you very much. May I help you off with your helmet? (*She does so*.)

WHITE KNIGHT shakes himself and turns his gentle face and mild eyes to ALICE. His tin armour fits him badly and he has a little wooden box fixed across his shoulders, upside-down, with the lid hanging open.

WHITE KNIGHT: (*In a friendly tone*.) I see you're admiring the White Knight box. It's my own invention – to carry clothes and sandwiches. I fixed it upside-down, so the rain can't get in.

ALICE: (*Gently*.) But things can drop out. Do you know the lid's open?

WHITE KNIGHT: I didn't realise. Everything's fallen out! An empty White Knight box is no use. (*He unfastens the box and is about to throw it away, when he has an idea, and hangs it on a tree*.) Can you guess why I did that?

ALICE shakes her head.

In hopes that bees will make a nest in it – then I can collect the honey. It's best to be ready for everything. That's why my horse wears anklets.

ALICE: What are they for?

WHITE KNIGHT: To guard against the bites of sharks. It's an invention of my own. And now I'll ride with you to the end of the wood – (*He falls off his horse again. ALICE helps him on to his feet*.) Perhaps I'll walk with you. Hmm. (*They walk together*.) I'm a great hand at inventing things. Now the cleverest thing I ever did invent was a pudding.

ALICE: Did it taste good?

WHITE KNIGHT: I don't believe that pudding was ever cooked. And yet it was a very clever pudding.

ALICE: (*Trying to cheer him up.*) What did you mean it to be made of?

WHITE KNIGHT: (*With a groan*.) It began with blotting-paper.

ALICE: That wouldn't be very nice, I'm afraid –

WHITE KNIGHT: Not on its own, but mixed up with other things – such as gunpowder and sealing-wax. Hmmm. But here I must leave you. (*They have come to the end of the wood, where a slope runs down to a brook*.) You are sad. Let me sing a song to comfort you.

ALICE: Is it very long?

WHITE KNIGHT: It's long, but it's very, very beautiful.
Everybody that hears me sing it – either it brings the tears into their eyes, or else –

ALICE: Or else what?

WHITE KNIGHT: Or else it doesn't, you know. The name of the song is called 'Haddocks' Eyes'.

ALICE: Oh, that's the name of the song, is it?

WHITE KNIGHT: No, you don't understand. That's what the name is called. The name is really 'The Aged Aged Man' and the tune's my own invention. (*Smiles*.)

The sun is setting and shining on his hair and armour in a blaze of light. ALICE leans against the tree listening, in a half dream, to the song. She doesn't cry, but this is the moment in all her adventures which she will remember most clearly.

(*Sings*.) I'll tell thee everything I can;
There's little to relate.
I saw an aged aged man,

A-sitting on a gate.
'Who are you, aged man?' I said,
'And how is it you live?'
And his answer trickled through my head
Like water through a sieve.

AGED AGED MAN appears sitting on his gate.

AGED AGED MAN: (*Sings*.) Good sir, I look for butterflies
That sleep among the wheat:
I make them into mutton-pies
And sell them in the street.
I sell them unto fearless men
Who sail on stormy seas;
And that's the way I get my bread –
A trifle, if you please.

WHITE KNIGHT: (*Sings*.) But I was thinking of a plan
To dye one's whiskers green,
And always use so large a fan
That they could not be seen.
So, having no reply to give
To what the old man said,
I cried, 'Come tell me how you live!'
And thumped him on the head.

AGED AGED MAN: (*Sings*.) My accents mild took up the tale:
I said: I go my ways,
And when I find a mountain-rill,
I set it in a blaze;
And thence they make a stuff they call

Rowlands' macassar oil –
Yet twopence-halfpenny is all
They give me for my toil.

WHITE KNIGHT: (*Sings*.) But I was thinking of a way
To feed oneself on batter,
And so go on from day to day
Getting a little fatter.
I shook him well from side to side
Until his face was blue:
'Come, tell me how you live, old man,
And what it is you do!'

AGED AGED MAN: (*Sings*.) Kind sir, I hunt for haddocks' eyes
Among the heather bright,
And work them into waistcoat-buttons
In the silent night.
And these I do not sell for gold
Or coin of silvery shine,
But for a copper halfpenny,
And that will purchase nine.

I sometimes dig for buttered rolls,
Or set limed twigs for crabs.
I sometimes search the grassy knolls
For wheels of hansom cabs.
And that's the way, between ourselves, (*Winks*.)
By which I get my wealth –
And very gladly will I drink
Your honour's noble health.

WHITE KNIGHT: (*Sings*.) I heard him then, for I had just
Completed my design
To keep the Menai Bridge from rust
By boiling it in wine.
I thanked him much for telling me
The way he got his wealth,
But chiefly for his wish that he
Might drink my noble health.

And now, if e'er by chance I put
My fingers into glue,
Or madly squeeze a right-hand foot
Into a left-hand shoe.
Or if I drop upon my toe
A very heavy weight,
I weep, for it reminds me so
Of that old man I used to know –

Now WHITE KNIGHT is backed by an invisible choir.

Whose look was mild, whose speech was slow,
Whose hair was whiter than the snow,
Whose face was very like a crow,
With eyes, like cinders, all aglow,
Who seemed distracted with his woe,
Who rocked his body to and fro,
And muttered mumblingly and low,
As if his mouth were full of dough,
Who snorted like a buffalo –

That summer evening, long ago,
A-sitting on a gate.

WHITE KNIGHT smiles at ALICE. She smiles back – she hasn't cried at all. The WHITE KNIGHT mounts his horse and turns his head along the road by which they have come.

You've only a few yards to go. Down the hill and over that little brook, and then you'll be a queen.

ALICE eagerly looks down to the brook.

But you'll stay and see me off first? I shan't be long. Would you wait and wave your handkerchief when I get to that turn in the road? I think it would encourage me.

ALICE: Of course I will. Thank you very much for coming so far – and for the song – I liked it very much.

WHITE KNIGHT: (*Doubtfully*.) I hope so. But you didn't cry as much as I thought you would.

ALICE and the WHITE KNIGHT shake hands. The WHITE KNIGHT begins to ride away

ALICE: (*To us.*) There he goes! (*As the WHITE KNIGHT falls off, waves, remounts and rides out of our sight.*) Goodbye, gentle Knight! (*She waves her handkerchief, then turns to look at the brook, readying herself for the run and the jump*.) I hope I encouraged him. And now for the last brook!

Brook-leaping music.

Chessboard shows Alice-Pawn moving to eighth square and becoming a queen.

Scene 10: Queen Alice

RABBIT: (*Stepping forward and blowing trumpet*.) Welcome to the Great Feast of the Three Queens.

Out to greet ALICE march MUSICIANS and two great troupes of FOOD – puddings, bowls of fruit, jellies, lemonade bottles, ice-creams etc and FIREWORKS – rockets, squibs, Catherine wheels, sparklers, fire fountains etc. Glitterballs spin and shine as ALICE is led towards a gigantic cross between the Albert Memorial and a wedding-cake. Half way up it, on a throne for three, sit the RED QUEEN and the WHITE QUEEN, who beckon to ALICE. ALICE begins to clamber up to them as the COMPANY sing and dance joyfully.

RABBIT: (*Sings*.)

To the looking-glass world it was Alice who said,
'I've a sceptre in hand, I've a crown on my head;
Let the looking-glass creatures, whatever they be
Come and dine with the Red Queen, the White Queen and me!'

COMPANY: (*Sing*.) Then fill up the glasses as quick as you can
And sprinkle the table with buttons and bran
Put cats in the coffee, and mice in the tea –
And welcome Queen Alice with thirty-times-three!

Confused cheering.

ALICE: Thirty times three makes ninety. I wonder if anyone's counting?

RABBIT: (*Sings*.)

'O looking-glass creatures,' said Alice, 'Draw near
'Tis an honour to see me, a favour to hear:

’Tis a privilege high to have dinner and tea
Along with the Red Queen, the White Queen and me!’

COMPANY: (*Sing*.) Then fill up the glasses with treacle and ink
Or anything else that is pleasant to drink;
Mix sand with the cider and wool with the wine –
And welcome Queen Alice with ninety-times-nine.

COMPANY cheers, then suddenly stops as ALICE joins the RED QUEEN and WHITE QUEEN on the throne.

ALICE: What’s this? (*Puts up her hands to find a gold crown on her head. She puts it on her lap to examine it.*) This is grand. I never expected to be a queen so soon. (*Puts her crown on again and realises she is sitting between the RED QUEEN and the WHITE QUEEN. To the RED QUEEN*.) Please would you tell me – is the game over now?

RED QUEEN: (*Snaps*.) Speak when you’re spoken to! Always speak the truth – think before you speak – and write it down afterwards.

ALICE: I didn’t mean –

RED QUEEN: You should have meant! What do you suppose is the use of a child without any meaning? Even a joke should have some meaning – and a child’s more important than a joke, I hope.

ALICE: I’m a queen now – don’t call me a child!

WHITE QUEEN: Which reminds me – we had such a thunderstorm last Tuesday. Part of the roof came off, and ever so much thunder got in – and it went rolling round the room in great lumps and knocking over the tables. I was so frightened I couldn’t remember my own name.

RED QUEEN: She's feverish after so much thinking. Pat her on the head and see how pleased she is.

WHITE QUEEN: (*Sighs and puts her head on ALICE's shoulder.*)
I'm so sleepy!

RED QUEEN: Poor thing! Smooth her hair and sing her a soothing lullaby. Like this.

RED QUEEN/WHITE QUEEN: (*Sing*.)
Hush-a-by lady, in Alice's lap!
Till the feast's ready, we've time for a nap:
When the feast's over, we'll go to the ball –
Red Queen, and White Queen and Alice and all!

RED QUEEN: (*Putting her head on ALICE's other shoulder*.) And now you know it, sing it through to both of us.

ALICE: What can I do? I don't think it ever happened before, in the whole history of England, that anyone had to take care of two queens asleep at once.

The two QUEENS snore gently.

ALICE: (*Sings*.) Hush-a-by ladies, in Alice's lap!
Crowns are so heavy, we all need a nap.
But when my eyes are closed all I can see
Is our old Looking Glass looking at me!

A low ominous sound is created by all the COMPANY except the QUEENS and ALICE. This sound grows and grows into a roar. The COMPANY panics and exits as the figure of the JABBERWOCK, like a pair of dark folding wings, begins to engulf the Albert Memorial Cake, including ALICE, RED QUEEN and WHITE QUEEN.

RED QUEEN: Queen Alice! Take care of yourself!

WHITE QUEEN: Something's going to happen!

The three QUEENS grab each other's hands as the figure of the JABBERWOCK closes around them. A great growling, gulping noise.

ALICE: (*From inside the JABBERWOCK*.) The Looking Glass!

The JABBERWOCK's mouth opens. ALICE flies out and on to the mantelpiece with the Red Queen and White Queen chesspieces in her two fists. Transformation music. ALICE, with a single glance behind her, passes through the Looking Glass.

Scene 11: The Looking Glass Room

ALICE enters through the Looking Glass and crouches on the mantelpiece. In her hands the RED QUEEN has become KITTY, the black kitten. The WHITE QUEEN has become SNOWDROP. Their mother, DINAH, is snoozing on the mantelpiece. Outside the snow is falling.

ALICE: (*Putting down KITTY and SNOWDROP*.) Welcome home, your Red and White Majesties. Don't purr too loudly or you'll wake your mother.

The KITTENS purr.

Look Kitty, look Snowdrop, the Red and White Queens. (*Holds up chesspieces*.) That's who you were in my dream. But was it my dream? Perhaps the Red King dreamed it. He was part of my dream, of course, but I was part of his dream too.

DODGSON: (*Off*.) Alice!

ALICE rubs her eyes. She stands on the mantelpiece. She half spreads her arms and glides from the mantelpiece and out of the looking-glass room into the falling snow.

Scene 12: The River

ALICE glides through the snowfall and into sunshine on the riverbank of the first scene and down into the boat in which DODGSON stands and DUCKWORTH, LORINA and EDITH sit. DODGSON takes ALICE's hand to help her into the boat. ALICE sits down. DODGSON and DUCKWORTH take up their oars.

ALICE: (*Her voice echoing oddly.*) Tell us a story. Please Mr Dodgson. Tell us a story with plenty of nonsense in it.

DODGSON: I've told you one story already today. That's all till next time.

ALICE/LORINA/EDITH: Ah, but it is next time!

ALICE: (*Intently*.) Oh, Mr Dodgson.

DODGSON: Alice.

ALICE: I wish you would write out Alice's adventures for me?

DODGSON: I don't know if I can.

ALICE: Of course you can. Will you?

DODGSON: I will try, Alice, I will try.

ALICE: (*Relaxing*.) Thank you.

DODGSON: (*Sings*.) A boat under a summer sky
Lingering onward dreamily
Down a quiet river in July.

ALL: (*Sing*.) All in a golden afternoon.

DUCKWORTH: (*Sings*.) And three sisters are whispering
Stories of bright imagining
As we float towards the evening.

ALL: (*Sing*.) All in a golden afternoon.

DODGSON/DUCKWORTH: (*Sing*.) Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily –
Life is but a dream.

ALL: (*Sing*.) Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily –
Life is but a dream.

All in a golden afternoon
All in a golden afternoon.

CHORUS of creatures sing in counterpoint to 'Golden Afternoon.'

CHORUS: 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.
All mimsy were the borogoves
And the mome raths outgrabe,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

RABBIT: Jabberwocky! Jabberwocky!

QUEEN OF HEARTS: Off with his head!

HATTER/DORMOUSE/HARE:
Twinkle, twinkle little bat

How I wonder what you're at.

GRYPHON/MOCK TURTLE:

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you
Won't you join the dance?

WALRUS/CARPENTER: The time has come, the walrus said,
To talk of many things, many things.

ALL: (*Sing*.) Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily –
Life is but a dream.

All in a golden afternoon
All in a golden afternoon.

The End.

Scenes and Songs

Act One

1. The River

‘Golden Afternoon’ sung by Dodgson, Duckworth, Alice, Lorina and Edith

2. The Rabbit Hole

‘Down, Down, Down’ sung by the Chorus

3. The Glass Table

‘Eat Me’ sung by Cake
‘Drink Me’ sung by Bottle
‘How Doth The Little Crocodile’ sung by Alice
‘Fury Said To the Mouse’ sung by Mouse and Creatures

4. Advice from a Caterpillar

‘You Are Old, Father William’ sung by Father William and Youth.

5. The Footmen

6. The Duchess’s Kitchen

‘Speak Roughly To Your Little Boy’ sung by Duchess, Cook and Baby.

7. A Wood

8. The Mad Tea-Party

‘Twinkle Twinkle Little Bat’ sung by Hatter.

9. The Queen’s Croquet Ground

‘The Lobster Quadrille’ sung by Mock Turtle, Gryphon and Alice.

‘Beautiful Soup’ sung by Mock Turtle, Gryphon and Alice.

10. The Royal Court

‘The Queen of Hearts’ sung by White Rabbit.

‘They Told Me You Had Been To Her’ sung by White Rabbit.

11. The Looking Glass Room

Act Two

1. The Looking Glass Room

‘Moonlight On The Mirror’ sung by Alice and Chorus.

2. The Other Side

‘Jabberwocky’ sung by Alice, Father William, Youth and Chorus.

3. The Garden Path

4. The Railway Carriage

5. The Wood

6. Tweedledum and Tweedledee

‘Tweedledum and Tweedledee’ sung by Alice and Chorus.
‘The Walrus and the Carpenter’ sung by Tweedledum,
Tweedledee, Walrus, Carpenter and Oysters.

7. The Shop

8. A Wall

‘Humpty Dumpty’ sung by Alice
‘In Winter When the Fields are White’ sung by Humpty Dumpty
‘The Lion and the Unicorn’ sung by Soldiers and Creatures

9. The White Knight

‘Haddock’s Eyes’ sung by White Knight and Aged Aged Man.

10. Queen Alice

‘Welcome Queen Alice’ sung by White Rabbit and the Company.

‘Hushaby Lady’ sung by Red Queen, White Queen and Alice.

11. The Looking Glass Room

12. The River

‘Golden Afternoon’ (reprise) sung by the Company.

Notes on a few characters

Alice was described by Dodgson/Carroll like this: ‘Loving, first, loving and gentle: loving as a dog (forgive the prosaic simile, but I know no earthly love so pure and perfect), and gentle as a fawn: then courteous – courteous to all, high or low, grand or grotesque, King or Caterpillar, even as though she were herself a King’s daughter, and her clothing of wrought gold: then trustful, ready to accept the wildest possibilities with all that utter trust that only dreamers know; and lastly, curious – wildly curious, and with the eager enjoyment of Life that comes only in the happy hours of childhood, when all is new and fair, and when Sin and Sorrow are but names – empty words signifying nothing.’

Dodgson also commended the actress who played Alice in the first dramatisation – Phoebe Carlo – for ‘her perfect assumption of the high spirits, and readiness to enjoy everything, of a child out for a holiday.’

The Red Queen is described by Dodgson as ‘A Fury, but…her passion must be cold and calm, she must be formal and strict, but not unkindly, pedantic to the tenth degree, the concentrated essence of all governesses!’

Dodgson describes the White Queen as ‘gentle, stupid, fat and pale; helpless as an infant, and with a slow, maundering, bewildered air about her just suggesting imbecility, but never quite passing into it.’

Millions of Alices

Once upon a time a five-year-old boy called Noel Moore became very ill and had to stay in bed for months. His grown-up friend, the writer and artist Beatrix Potter, wrote him letters about the doings of her pet rabbit Peter. She illustrated them with lively drawings. They became *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. When Miss Potter was asked about writing for children, she wrote: 'It is much more satisfactory to address a real live child; I often think that that was the secret of the success of Peter Rabbit, it was written to a child — not made to order.'

Once upon another time a ten-year-old girl called Alice Liddell went for a boat trip with her two sisters Lorina and Edith and two young men. Mr Charles Dodgson, who later published books under the name of Lewis Carroll, wrote: 'Duckworth and I made an expedition up the river to Godstow with the 3 Liddells: we had tea on the bank there… On which occasion I told them the fairy-tale of "Alice's Adventures Underground", which I undertook to write out for Alice and which is now finished.'

Without Noel Moore and Alice Liddell there might have been no *Peter Rabbit* and no *Alice in Wonderland*.

Beatrix Potter and Charles Dodgson had no children of their own. I'm lucky enough to have five grown-up children who've given me seven grandchildren — five girls and two boys. I'll tell you about just one of them, who has been something like an Alice to me. She is called Caitlin and she has always had a bright smile, a warm heart and a wild imagination.

The first play I took her to was one of mine — four stories by Beatrix Potter turned into plays with songs in *Tom Kitten and His Friends* at the Unicorn Theatre for Children. Through both acts she sat silently staring at the stage, neither laughing nor clapping. It was only when we came home that she exploded. Rapidly she rearranged the furniture. She announced that she was Tom Kitten, gave all the rest of us smaller parts and began directing the play. She was aged three and a half.

When Caitlin was nearly five my wife and I took her to a walkabout version of *Alice in Wonderland* by the London Bubble Theatre Company in Waterlow Park. It was a superb production, but as it grew dark and the White Rabbit guided us with a flaming torch, we wondered if Caitlin wasn't

too tired to stay to the end. But before we could speak Caitlin turned to us with an amazing smile and said: ‘I’d like to stay here for ever.’ We stayed, and shared her delight.

When she was five and a bit there was a wonderful production of *Guys and Dolls* at the National Theatre directed by Richard Eyre. We wanted to take Caitlin, so she was prepared for the visit. First she watched a video of the movie — she liked the story so much that she watched it three times. Then we took her to the Olivier Theatre. Once again she sat silently, totally focused, no applause. When Clive Rowe came on stage as Nicely Nicely Johnson and I nudged her and said he’s one of my favourite actors in the world, Caitlin shushed me.

Since then we’ve taken her and her little sister Zoe to many productions, including my versions of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Jemima Puddleduck and Her Friends*. Nowadays Caitlin laughs and claps, knows the songs off by heart when the curtain comes down and is just about my ideal audience.

So when I’m writing for children of about eight, which is maybe my favourite age, I don’t think I am Writing For Children. No, I’m writing for Caitlin — just as Lewis Carroll was writing for Alice Liddell and Beatrix Potter was writing for Noel Moore. There are millions of children whom I don’t know, but are just as fascinated as Caitlin by stories and songs and animals and jokes and costumes and bright lights — just as fascinated as Caitlin and Zoe and Robin and Arthur and Lola and Natasha and Charlotte and I…

Charles Dodgson/Lewis Carroll said he wrote *Alice in Wonderland* ‘to please a child I loved (I don’t remember any other motive)’. It’s the best reason in the world, and to please seven children I love is the reason I wrote this play.

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